CANADIAN NIGHTS

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BEING SKETCHES AND REMINISCENCES OF
LIFE AND SPORT IN THE ROCKIES
THE PRAIRIES, AND THE
CANADIAN WOODS

BY

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN

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CANADIAN NIGHTS

WILLIE WHISPER

YEARS ago, it matters not when, it was my not unpleasant fate to spend an idle week in the woods, and the memory of it is still fresh in my mind.

It was late in the autumn. The glorious foliage of the hardwood trees lay like a many-tinted carpet on the earth, soon to be wrapped in its winter covering of virgin snow. The air was very still. Not a breath stirred the withered leaves of the alders fringing the river bank when I and a half-breed pushed off in a "dug-out" to force our way up stream towards the winter camp which my other two Indians were constructing in the heart of the big woods. It was bitterly cold under the morning star. Ice was forming rapidly on the reeds and sedges margining the stream. The water dripping from our poles froze, making the footing in that most rickety of vessels, a

"dug-out," more than usually insecure. It was that uncomfortable interlude between summer and winter when the weather is not cold and dry enough to admit of soft caribou skin moccasins over heaps of woollen socks, and is much too wet and cold to make raw-hide knee boots comfortable wear.

But poling up a rushing river is vigorous exercise. Presently the great sun rose in a flood of light, shedding genial warmth; and as the day wore on towards noon we were hot enough and tired enough to enjoy a pannikin of strong tea, a piece of hard bread, a quiet smoke and a rest. But the rest was short. It was freezing so hard that it became evident that unless we pushed on our chance of reaching the old lumber camp at the head of the stream before the ice made on the still reaches was small indeed. So push on we did, forcing the canoe up with our poles where the open current ran strong, and breaking our way with our paddles through the rapidly forming ice on still reaches, till a little before sundown we ran the dug-out ashore at the old camp situated just above where the stream drained the still waters of a chain of small ponds or lakes.

The prospect was not encouraging. Further progress by water was obviously impossible as

long as the cold snap lasted, and it really looked as if it had come to stay; but, with the philosophy bred by contact with nature, we cut a supply of maple logs and young branches of the "sapin," lit a big fire on the deserted hearth, made our fragrant beds, ate our supper, smoked our pipes, and curled up to sleep.

It was in the small hours of the morning, a little before dawn, that I was jerked out of sleep by someone pulling aside the blanket we had hung across the doorway and walking unceremoniously up to the dying fire. Having raked the embers together and blown fresh logs into a cheerful blaze the newcomer pulled off his sodden cow-hide boots, stuck his dripping socks on two sticks to dry, and turning to me with a courteous old-fashioned inclination of the head, said, "Good morning, sir. It is a monstrous fine morning, but all nature is ashake with cold and so, by gad, am I!" By this time the "voyageur" was also awake, and greeting the newcomer with "Bojure, bojure, Willie," turned to me and said under his breath, "He Willie Whisper. He crazy as a loon but no harm, just like one child." So we made Willie welcome, brewed some tea, handed him a stick of tobacco, and sat awhile to smoke.

I had often heard of Willie Whisper, a queer old fellow by all accounts, an educated man, so 'twas said, who had seen the world and knew men and cities, but who for some unaccountable reason lived solitary in the woods, coming rarely and with reluctance into settlements and the haunts of man. Quite mad, most white men thought, because they could not understand a sane man leading such a life; although some said he was sane enough in most respects but had communings with ghosts, and talked and whispered with the trees and wild creatures and birds. All agreed that he was a kindly, harmless man, and the Indians held him in reverence and deep respect. Sitting there in the full light of a bright fire of sweet-smelling maple and birch I saw a man past middle age, stooping more perhaps by the weight of packs than of years, silvering hair falling about a fine-cut intellectual face; in short, a somewhat dilapidated Englishman in coarse homespun clothes, ragged and unkempt, but with that air about him which in some men nothing can efface. Beyond that hall-mark of gentle breeding there was nothing remarkable about this remarkable man except his eyes and an expression upon his face difficult to describe—a look of sadness but of infinite patience

and ineffable peace. His glance was not piercing or alert. It was abstracted rather. His eyes certainly had not what novelists describe as "a far away look"; but they looked as if they saw a great deal more than there was to see, as if they saw right through everything to something beyond, as though, while conscious of all his surroundings, he was perceptive also of something else in relation to them. His face bore an expression as though to say, "If you knew what I know you would be sure, as I am, that nothing matters and all is well."

Willie Whisper was, as he told us, on his way down but had got stuck up in the ice a few miles back. Winter had not set in, for the lakes were not full, but the cold snap would last some days, and he had made his way on foot to the old lumber camp to wait for a thaw.

"You will have more visitors," he added; "I heard them breaking the ice on the old beaver dam beyond long portage yesterday as the sun set."

"Why!" I cried, "that is thirty miles away."

"Quite so, but all the same I heard them, and I know something about them. Two birch-bark canoes and, I think, six men. I cannot be certain

of course, but I expect they will carry round the dead water and run down the open stream to the head of these ponds where the ice will stop them again. Some are newcomers from home, perhaps going hunting like yourself, but the others know the country, and I think you will find them walking in here in a couple of days."

"Well, Willie," I said, "the more the merrier. If the frost holds they will be welcome."

"To you very likely," grumbled Willie, "for the gentlemen hunters are of your kind, but I am not so sure that I shall like the others. They have been ranging the deep woods looking for lumber and menacing my friends the trees, and have been searching for that solidified curse, gold."

With that he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and, wrapping himself in his blanket, lay down by the fire. I followed his example, and slept until the sun was a good half-hour high.

After breakfast—the inevitable hard tack and tea—Willie and I caught a mess of trout through a hole in the ice to eke out the very slender ration of fat pork that we possessed. The day had broken hard and clear. It was freezing in the shade, but a glorious sun struck hot through an atmosphere absolutely still, and after our midday meal

we sat with our backs against a great tree and smoked and talked. A most interesting talk it was, for the strange and fascinating companion that kindly fate had sent my way told me much about himself. That he was a cultivated gentleman was plain to eye and ear. Many such are to be met in queer corners of the world, and generally the stamp of failure, sometimes also of disgrace, is plainly to be seen. But this man was different, and I had wondered by what freak of nature or chance of fortune one so evidently a product of civilisation had become a child of the woods and wilds. He told me about it in something like the following words.

"You are quite right," he said, "I have not drifted into this phase of existence through failure or disgrace. I have not forged anybody's name, or cheated at cards, or as a wastrel made myself a hopeless misery to my friends. Nor is there any woman in my story. I adopted this kind of life of my own free will, though not without many struggles against it, because it seemed to me the only thing I could do. I am an Irishman, which perhaps accounts for something, and a younger son of a politically powerful family, which certainly accounts for much more. I was at Harrow and

Oxford, and I was destined for the Bar—more, I fancy, as introductory to some other career than as likely to lead to the Woolsack. By good or evil chance, I don't know which, a leading member of the party then in opposition met me in a country-house and took a fancy to me, and offered me a billet as a sort of unpaid assistant secretary. I was the fortunate or unfortunate possessor of an income sufficient to keep me. I was young, fairly clever, full of debating-society political enthusiasm, and I gladly accepted the offer as likely to open a path satisfactory to legitimate ambition. And it did. For the first few years, for so long, in fact, as I occupied a subordinate position, the footsteps of time trod pleasantly.

"The work was easy, if uninteresting, consisting mainly of looking up a few facts and statistics, of writing polite letters of disapproval, or non-committal letters of approval, of soothing the wounded self-importance of an occasional constituent, and of applying to fractured engagements some plausible excuse. I saw the best of the best society. I was looked upon as 'a rising young man' and I knew it. In short I had a very good time. It was not until my superior officer obtained a nice little government post as

the reward of long and meritorious secretarial service and I stepped into his cast-off secretarial shoes, that the actualities of public political life began to dispel the illusions with which I had embellished it. I was in the inner ring. In all things political I became the confidant of my chief; and oh, the bitter awakening of it all!

"It seemed to me that all were for the party and none were for the state. Men who in private life were truthful and the soul of honour laboured under the conviction or illusion that politics was a game to which the ordinary rules of ethics did not apply. All means were deemed legitimate to serve a legitimate end, and what was the end? To gull the people, to outmanœuvre an opponent, to get the inside track of a friend, to avert party disaster, to inflict party defeat. It was party alone that the players thought of. Place and power were the stakes and no code of honour regulated the game. Oh, of course my chief, in common no doubt with others, acted on the assumption that the success of his party was essential to the well-being of the state. But did they really think so? I would fain believe it, but who can say? Has not the same belief or delusion possessed every great conqueror and scourge

of God who has deluged the fair earth with blood? What were considered the most useful qualities in a public man? Statesmanship, sound judgment, intuitive insight? Not at all. Mob oratory; the dramatic instinct, the power so to identify self momentarily with an assumed part as to move great audiences. Oh well, I need not go into all that. Public political life seemed to me at any rate to be compounded of personal ambition, private jealousy, and profound contempt for all the great principles for which the players in a disreputable game professed to be willing, nay anxious, to sacrifice their lives. I am not laying down the law, mind you. I may be all wrong, I admit. I am only telling you how the insight affected me. I found myself, according to my instincts, playing a subordinate part in a sordid comedy not unlikely to turn into a tragedy for the poor stupid ignorant people herded like bleating sheep into the party folds of the principal actors on the stage. I felt degraded. I am not a religious man, certainly not in the dogmatic sense, but I even then believed in a great first cause, in the persistence of some core of me derived from that Supreme Being, and in my responsibility; and I began to wonder whether anything

can profit a man if he lose his own soul. I felt as if the life I was leading left, as it flowed through me, some accretion binding and choking the best in me. The thought sickened me. How far it was all a question of nerves I didn't know. I consulted an old friend of mine, a very eminent medical man, and something of a psychologist also. Of course he said nerves, brain fag, overwork, and recommended a complete change; but he added, 'Congenial work is never too hard. It is the work that jars that irritates the nerves. Perhaps your work cuts against the grain. If it does, give it up, for that is the only cure.'

"Well, I took his advice partially by utilising my first long vacation in a trip—a solitary trip into the wilds. That was my undoing from a utilitarian point of view. I cannot tell you—well, I suppose it is scarcely necessary, for you must understand something about it yourself—anyhow I cannot describe the cleansing, healing influence of the deep woods upon perplexed spirit and harassed nerves. Great flakes of all the conventionalities and hypocrisies of the world seemed to be shed off me. Something seemed to whisper, 'What is your civilisation after all? Masses of men struggling to survive, striving amid degrading surround-

ings to force or crawl their way out of the general mass and welter of humanity. What is the life of your own class in the great city in which your lot is cast? The same conflict, only under politer forms. The same struggle to get the better of others. The weariness and the vain endeavour to find in artificial gaiety a little forgetfulness in each fretful day. What do you find here? A struggle also—the incomprehensible immutable law of all being that only by travail can life ascend; but under what different conditions! An honest fight, an open fight, and under surroundings clean and sweet; and with it great contentment and peace of mind. Surely this is the natural and proper life of man.' "

Willie Whisper paused to refill and light his pipe.

"And so," I broke in, "you made the great renunciation, left it all and followed the call of the wild?"

"No, no, not by any means. I fought that which I now believe to be my better self hard. I went back to it all, to the intense interest and excitement of politics, to all the pleasures that London can offer to a young and fortune-favoured man. But you are right. The call of the wild

proved too strong at last. I wearied of the pleasures. The sham patriotism and real selfishness of politicians disgusted me. Everything was so mercenary, even art and literature saturated with it and degraded. I think had I found some outlet in great commercial undertakings, engineering exploits, or trading adventure, I might have stood it out; but no, my lines were cast in politics; politics sickened me, and at long last I cut clean adrift and sought the simple life. The simple life! Yes, fools play at it at home. Eat nuts and get indigestion. Walk barefoot and catch colds. No, my dear sir, that is of no kind of use. If you cannot lead the life into which according to the catechism God has called you—if to you the simple life becomes an absolute necessity, a craving that cannot be denied, you must seek it where only it can be found. Don't play with nature. Give yourself wholly up to nature and nature will give herself wholly up to you, and you will find peace.

"But don't suppose that peace and contentment came to me all at once. I suffered from qualms of conscience—thought that perhaps duty to others made it necessary for me to struggle on in my natural sphere, however disastrous the consequences

might be to myself. I had lapses towards civilisation. The lights of London lured me. But one day something happened, I know not what, that drove all thought of the great world of busy cities for ever from my mind."

"What happened?" I cried, for Willie paused and seemed to fall into a reverie.

"What happened?" he resumed, rousing himself. "I don't know, but something happened that in a flash changed my whole conception of life, of the world, of the universe, of the past, the present, and the future. I cannot understand it myself; so how can I hope to make you understand? But I will try.

"I am not, as most people suppose, an absolute wild man of the woods. I have a local habitation and a name. Do you know the country about Great Green Lake? Yes, well, when I first came out I bought a few acres of land near by where the Manchester river runs out, cleared a patch and built me a house, well, perhaps a shanty is a more suitable term than house. There I keep a few books—classics, and the stores I need, and there I find an occasional letter from the outside world. There I generally spend the few unpleasant weeks of the early spring and late fall, and in a sense it is

my home; but, thank God, in this favoured corner of the world man wants but little shelter, and for nine months out of the twelve the woods are my real home and the sky my roof. Well, I was sitting outside the house one evening watching, in a perfectly normal state of mind and body, the blessed sun go down, when suddenly a most appalling sensation engulfed me. The house, the lake, the forest, the firmament, and—oh, the horror of it! I myself—became utter nothingness. It was indescribably awful. But instantaneously that nothingness became everythingness. In a flash I saw myself, all past, present, and future, all created or to be created things as one point without dimensions, position in time or space, or anything. In a flash it came. In a flash it was gone, and I was there a solitary man, brooding in the dusk, my back against a tree. It passed absolutely, but it left an indelible impression impossible to convey in words. Language is based on phenomena and conceptions of time, space, and dimensions, and language cannot deal with something outside of limitations. I can only describe the impression as one of completion, of perfection, of flawless oneness. I knew myself to be an imperishable atom in one great whole and

akin to everything external to me that I could sense.

"Did something snap in my brain? I don't know. People say I am crazy, 'crazy as a loon,' as your Indian said. Well, maybe I am, but I am sane enough to know it. The Indians think that I and the beasts and birds talk together and understand each other; and that I hold whispered conversations with the trees and little herbs and flowers of the field, and call me therefore Willie Whisper. That is, of course, all nonsense; but it is true that the momentary sense of oneness exposed some cord of sensitiveness that vibrates to all the life about me. It developed some sort of community of interest—shall I say of intelligence?—between me and other living things. Some sense other than the ordinary physical senses came into embryonic being and, in some way that I do not in the least understand, I do become conscious of facts and happenings through some medium unconnected with the ordinary means whereby the self becomes aware of phenomena external to it. I cannot control it. The relative importance of events appears to have no bearing upon it. For instance, I told you that

men are coming here and so they surely are, for when these perceptions come to me they are never wrong, but it is improbable that the advent of these strangers has any bearing upon the course of your life or of mine, and why it should have been perceived by me I cannot say.

"Well now," said Willie, getting up and stretching himself, "I have talked enough and more than enough about myself. I have talked the sun down below the tops of those pines, and I only hope I have not bored you nearly to tears. Why I have thus discoursed about my most uninteresting life and experiences goodness only knows, but it has at least eaten up some hours of a necessarily uneventful day. Come, it is getting chilly. Let us in to cook our supper and then, to while away the time till sweet sleep sets us free to wander, we must talk of some of our experiences in the wilds." So we strolled back to camp, carried in fuel for the night, cooked our supper of trout, frizzling in fat pork, made up a bright fire of sweet-smelling birch, and sat down to smoke and yarn.

"Well, Willie," said I "you have done me a good turn, and a day that would have been weary

has passed in most interesting talk. One good turn deserves another, but with all the will in the world I don't know how I can repay you. I am fresh from affairs and men, but the great world and the ways of it have but little changed since you left it not so very many years ago, and neither current politics nor recent society doings, scandalous or otherwise, would interest you. Instead of that you shall tell me something of your own life in the woods and on the plains and mountains. I'm only an amateur of the prairies and the Rockies, and I dare say you have forgotten twice as much as I shall ever know."

"There you're wrong," said Willie; "I don't think, leading this kind of life, that one ever forgets what happens in it. You see it's all there is, and to a solitary man memory takes the place of a library and of society. If I'm sitting over the fire and want diversion all I have to do is to run over in remembrance some of my early experiences; the more you think, the more you remember. It's like taking out a book that you've once read and half forgotten, and finding it full of bright pictures."

"Well, we have no books here," I answered.

"We have the evening to while away; dip into your memory library and let us have yarns or pictures—I don't mind which. A man who lives alone with nature ought to have a lot to tell."

"No," said Willie, looking into the fire, "I can't talk about the life I lead now. A solitary life leaves no record. It is enough for me to live it—I don't want to talk it. What I amuse myself by recalling—and I don't mind telling all I remember about that—is my experience as an ordinary hunter. As I told you, I wasn't always a solitary; and before I abandoned civilisation I went one or two trips with a friend; we took servants and gillies, and did it in comfort." He smiled whimsically. "Go back to that sort of thing I couldn't—but it's amusing to remember."

And it was thus that we came to talk about Colorado and about life in the woods and on the plains. What was spoken by the fire on those nights has long gone into the silence that engulfs all human speech; but the substance of it as I afterwards wrote it, and the memory of those far-off days, are preserved in the following pages.

A COLORADO SKETCH

IT would appear that the American continent was originally of considerably larger dimensions than it is at present. It was probably found to be altogether too large for comfort or convenience, and it was reduced by the simple process of pressing or squeezing it together from the sides—an operation which caused it to crumple up towards the centre, and produced that great, elevated, tumbled, and tossed region generally and vaguely known as the Rocky Mountains. If this simple theory of the formation of a continent sounds somewhat infantile, you must remember that I am not a scientific man, and that it is not more unscientific than many other theories of creation. There is no such thing as a chain of Rocky Mountains. Under that name are included various ranges and belts of mountains and hills, which embrace within their far-stretching arms fertile valleys, arid deserts, sunny hill-slopes clothed with valuable timber, parks full of pastoral beauty basking beneath a sun that warms them into semi-

tropical life, but which never melts the virgin snow whitening the hoary heads of the mountains that for ever look down upon those smiling scenes. Rich and extensive plains, tracts of inhabitable land almost large enough to be the cradle and home of nations, are included in the Rocky Mountains. Among all the states and territories that lie wholly or partially within the borders of this vast, upheaved region, there is none, so far as I am aware, more favoured by nature, and, at the same time, more accessible to man, than Colorado. It is easily reached from all the great cities of the Eastern States; its scenery is varied, beautiful, grand, and even magnificent. Crystal streams of pure, wholesome water rush down the hill-sides, play at hide-and-seek in the woods, and wander deviously through the parks. The climate is health-giving—unsurpassed, as I believe, anywhere —giving to the jaded spirit, the unstrung nerves, and weakened body a stimulant, a tone, and a vigour that can only be appreciated by those who have had the good fortune to travel or reside in that region.

The parks of Colorado constitute its special feature: there is nothing elsewhere on the American continent resembling them in natural character-

istics. They are not valleys; they are too flat and too extensive for that. They cannot be called plains, for they are not flat enough; and, besides, plains are generally bare and destitute of trees, while the parks are rich in timber, with beautifully undulating surfaces, broken up by hills, spurs from the parent range, and isolated mountains. The term "Park" is usually applied to ground more or less artificially made; and these places are very properly called parks, for they look, if it be not rank heresy to liken nature to art, as if ground naturally picturesque had been carefully laid out and planted with most consummate skill and taste. Some of them are of great size, such as the North, Middle, South, and St. Louis Parks; others—and it is with them I am best acquainted—are comparatively small.

There are many things to arouse deep interest in that favoured region. Where you find lofty mountains, foot-hills, plain, valley, forest, and quick-flowing stream, in a southern latitude, you have in combination all that can gratify the scientific student, as well as all that can content the eye of man, in the way of scenery. The philosopher who devotes himself to the study of atmospheric conditions could nowhere find a more

fitting field for observation. The mountain ranges and extensive level spaces comprised within their limits are important factors in the economy of nature. The great masses of heat-radiating rock temper the winds that blow over them, and shed genial warmth far and wide. The whole region is one vast brewery of storms. Chemical changes are constantly going on. Electricity is working with exceptional vigour, riving the solid rocks, devastating trees, and putting forth most vividly the awful and mysterious manifestations of its strength. Hot currents and cold currents fight aerial battles round those patient peaks, that stand unmoved amidst the roar and racket of elemental strife. Frequent lightnings blaze or flicker round the mountain heads; continuous thunder crashes on their slopes, and rolls and rumbles in the caverns and valleys that seam their sides. Tempests shriek round the crags, and moan dismally as they toss the gnarled and matted branches of the stunted trees that force their adventurous way up the broad shoulders of the range. Snow in winter, rain and hail in summer, pour upon the higher summits; while, beneath, the land is glowing under a cloudless sky. Contending air-currents of different density discharge their

moisture on the hills. The sun draws up fresh moisture from the valleys, like drawing water from a well. All nature seems seething in that region of heat and cold, sunshine and tempest, dryness and damp, constantly fabricating those great cloud masses that, breaking away from their cradle, carry rain and fertility over thousands and thousands of miles. Sometimes they over-exert themselves, carry their good intentions too far, exceed their proper limits, and, transgressing the boundaries of their native land, cross the wide Atlantic and pour their accumulated store of rain upon those already sodden little islands, Great Britain and Ireland.

The parks and valleys which spread out beneath the mountains, or nestle cosily amid the warm folds of the forest mantles which clothe them, play also an important part. They act as reservoirs; they catch the little, tiny, ice-cold rills that trickle out from under the ever-melting but never-melted snow, gather them together, hold them till they grow strong enough to carve their way through the granite flanks that hem them in, and launch them out into the world, forming rivulets bright and sparkling, flecked with light and shade, over which the quivering aspen bends

from banks sweet and bright with flowers; growing into brooks down which lumber may be rafted; swelling into streams which carry irrigation and fertility to arid wastes; becoming rivers upon which steamboats ply and ships ride at anchor.

Physical geography is a fascinating science; and to the student of it nothing can be more interesting than to stand upon some commanding mountain top, and, with a large, comprehensive view, study the configuration of the country that gives birth to those rivers that in their course determine the natural geographical features of a continent, and consequently shape the destiny of a race. From many a peak in Colorado the geographer can trace the devious line of the "water-shed," the "divide" that separates the rivers and sends them out, each on its appointed course; and can see, shining like silver threads, the rivulets from which they spring. Looking westward, and to the north and south, he can see the fountains of both Plattes, of the Rio Grande—the Grand river—the Arkansas, the Blue, the White, and the Bear rivers, and other streams which unite to form that most extraordinary of all rivers on the American continent—the Colorado. Turning to the east, a very different scene greets his eye; there, spread out

like an ocean beneath him, lies the Prairie, that great deposit of gravel, sand, and unstratified clays, the debris of the mountain range on which he stands.

Where could the geologist find a region more suitable for the exercise of his peculiar branch of science than one which combines the vast deposit of the prairies with mountain masses obtruded from the bowels of the earth, and deep cañons exposing broad sections of the earth's crust to his view? And where is the mineralogist more likely to be rewarded for his pains? As to the botanist, I would almost warn him from visiting those scenes, lest he should never be able to tear himself away; for the variety of the flora is infinite, ranging from Alpine specimens blooming amid everlasting snows, to flowers of a very different character, growing in rich luxuriance in deep valleys under a subtropical sun.

I have not included hunting among the sciences, but in reality I might have done so. It is a very exact science, and one in which excellence is rarely obtained. Many men never become, never can become, good hunters. They are not endowed with the necessary faculties; and those who are gifted with them require years of study and hard

work before they can be entitled to call themselves masters of the art. I hope no one labours under the delusion that hunting is a mere barbarous, bloodthirsty sport. Every good hunter will agree with me that it is not the killing of the animal that gives pleasure. The charm lies in overcoming difficulties—in matching your natural intelligence and acquired knowledge and skill against the instinct, cunning, intellect, and reason of the animal you are endeavouring to outwit. The reward of the hunter is the same as that of the student of languages, of the archæologist, of the geologist—in fact, of all scientific people. His triumph is the triumph of unravelling a mystery, tracing and discovering a hidden fact, grappling with and overcoming a difficulty. It is the fact of overcoming, not the act of killing, that brightens the hunter's eye and renders his occupation so charming. The hunter's craft gives health, its surroundings are beautiful, it calls forth some of the best qualities of man, it is full of fascination, and it is no wonder that primitive races find it difficult to emerge from the hunting condition. It is most annoying that everything that is pleasant is all wrong. We all know that peoples, in their progress towards civilisation, advance from the

hunting to the pastoral state, from the pastoral to the agricultural, and from thence to a condition of existence in which the manufacturing instincts of man are fully developed. This is the sequence —hunting, cattle-tending, sheep-herding, fesh air, good water, lovely scenery, wholesome excitement, healthy lives, and—barbarism ; agriculture, manufactures, great cities, hideous country, poisoned water, impure air, dirt, disease, and—civilisation. It is difficult sometimes to know exactly what to say when preaching civilisation to the savage. It is certain that, so far as the masses of the people are concerned, the highest aim of civilisation is to secure to a large number the same blessings that a small number obtain, freely and without trouble, in an uncivilised state.

It was sport—or, as it would be called in the States, hunting—that led me first to visit Estes Park. Some friends and I had visited Denver at Christmas to pay our proper devotions to the good things of this earth at that festive season, and, hearing rumours of much game at Estes Park, we determined to go there. We spent a day or two laying in supplies, purchasing many of the necessaries and a few of the luxuries of life, and wound up our sojourn in Denver with a very

pleasant dinner at an excellent restaurant, not inaptly styled the "Delmonico" of the West. During dinner one of those sudden and violent storms peculiar to that region came on. When we sat down the stars were shining clear and hard with the brilliancy that is so beautiful in those high altitudes on a cold dry mid-winter night, and not a breath of wind disturbed the stillness of the air; but, before we had half satisfied the appetites engendered by the keen frosty atmosphere, the stars were all shrouded in cloud, the gale was howling through the streets, and snow was whirling in the air, piling up in drifts wherever it found a lodgment, and sifting in fine powder through every chink and cranny in the door. It did not last long. Before morning the sky was clear, cloudless, steely, star-bespangled as before, and when we left by an early train for Longmont Station the sun was shining undimmed upon fields of freshly-fallen snow.

By way of enlivening the journey we were treated by thoughtful nature to a magnificent spectacle—a beautiful exhibition of that phenomenon known, I believe, as a parhelion. The sun was only a few degrees above the horizon. The sky was very clear and intensely blue overhead,

but slightly clouded with a thin gauzy film round the horizon, and, on looking up, one could see that the air was full of minute crystals of ice. It was tolerably cold—probably about fifteen or twenty degrees below zero—and perfectly calm. All round the horizon ran a belt of pure bright white light, passing through the sun. This belt was not exactly level, but dipped a little to the east and west, and rose slightly to the north and south. The sun was surrounded by a halo showing rainbow colours on the inside, which faded into white light on the outside edge. A bright perpendicular ray of white light cut through the sun, forming, with the belt that ran round the horizon, a perfect cross. There was a similar cross in the west, and another in the north, but none in the south at first, but after an hour or so a fourth cross formed in that quarter also. Right overhead was a partially formed horizontal rainbow, the colours of which were very bright. Sometimes this rainbow would develop into an almost perfect circle; then again it would diminish till there remained only a small segment of the circle. The points where the solar halo cut the belt which encircled the horizon were intensely brilliant—almost as bright as the sun—and rays of white

light struck down from them. As the sun rose the halo surrounding it became very dazzling, and assumed the colours of the rainbow, and a second rainbow-tinted circle formed outside it. The rainbow in the zenith increased at the same time in brilliancy, and a second circle formed outside that also. The whole phenomenon was very beautiful; it continued some hours, gradually fading away, and finally disappeared about three in the afternoon.

The next morning we loaded up a wagon with stores and started on our toilsome expedition to the Park. It is very easy work—it is not work at all, in fact—to get into the Park nowadays. It was a very different affair at that time. There are two good stage-roads now; there was no road at all then—only a rough track going straight up hill and down dale, and over rocks and through trees and along nearly perpendicular slopes, with the glorious determination to go straight forward of an old Roman road, but without any of the engineering skill and labour expended upon the latter. It was a hard road to travel, covered with snow and slippery with ice; but by dint of literally putting our shoulders to the wheel uphill, by chaining the wheels downhill, and by holding up the wagon by ropes and main strength on pre-

cipitous hill-sides, we got to our destination very late at night with only one serious accident—the fracture of a bottle containing medical comforts.

The road from Longmont to the Park traverses the level plain for about fifteen miles, and then enters a cañon flanked on either side by strange-shaped masses of bright red sandstone, outcropping from the surface, and in some places tilted nearly on end. It then follows along the bank of the St. Vrain River — teeming with trout — crosses that stream, and works its way with many curves and twists up through the foot-hills, along grassy slopes, through pine forests, past fantastic masses of rock, crosses a little creek hiding deep among aspens and poplars, and, after plunging down two violent descents and mounting up again, enters a long valley rejoicing in the euphonious title of "Muggins's Gulch." I do not know who Muggins was—no doubt an honest citizen; but he should have changed his name before bestowing it upon such a pretty spot. You ascend this valley at an easy gradient till you reach the summit, when suddenly a lovely view bursts upon you, and the Park lies spread out at your feet. On the left the hill-side rises steeply, crowned with a buttress of frowning rock. On the right a mountain of

almost solid rock stands naked and savage. In front, beyond the Park, the main range of mountains rears itself, topped with snow, rent in great chasms, pierced by the gloomy heavily-timbered depths of black cañon. On the extreme left and in the distance Long's Peak towers above its fellows; and beneath you, in strange contrast with the barren foot-hills through which you have passed, and the savage stern grandeur of the range, lies the Park—undulating, grass-covered, dotted with trees, peaceful and quiet, with a silver thread of water curving and twining through its midst.

A log-house is comfortable enough at any time; and on that particular night it appeared eminently so to us, as, cold and wearied, we passed the hospitable threshold. What a supper we devoured, and what logs we heaped upon the fire, till we made the flames leap and roar on the open hearth! and then lay down on mattresses on the floor, and listened to the howling of the wind, till the noise of the tempest, confusedly mingling with our dreams, was finally hushed in deep, unbroken sleep.

The winter weather in Northern Colorado is most enjoyable. At the high altitude of Estes

Park, between 7000 and 8000 feet above sea-level, it consists of alternate short storms and long spells of fine weather. You will have several days of bright clear weather, hard frost, the thermometer very low, but the sun so powerful that you can lie down and go fast asleep, as I have frequently done, on a warm, sunny, and sheltered bank in the very depth of winter. Then the clouds begin to accumulate, growing denser and denser, till they break and descend in a snowstorm of some hours' duration. The cattle, which before dotted all the open ground, disappear as if by magic, seeking and finding shelter in little hidden gulches and unnoticed valleys, and the land looks utterly desolate. The snowstorm is invariably succeeded by a violent tempest of wind, which speedily clears the ground of snow, heaping it up in drifts, and blowing the greater part of it into the air in such a thin powdery condition that it is taken up by the atmosphere and disappears completely. So dry is the air and so warm the winter's sun that snow evaporates without leaving any moisture behind it. Another period of clear, still, cold weather then follows after the gale.

The violence of these tempests is very great. Many a night have I lain awake listening to the

screams and clamour of the gale; now rising suddenly to a shriek as a fresh gust of wind came tearing down the level plain, snatching up pebbles and stones, sending them hopping over the ground, and hurling them against the log-house; then sinking to a long melancholy moan; whistling shrilly around the walls, hoarsely howling in the wide chimney; while, under all, the low continuous roar of the tempest raging in the distant forest sounded like a mighty bass note in the savage music of the storm.

That is the time to appreciate the comfort of a warm weather-proof house, to snuggle up in your blanket and idly watch the merry sparks fly up the chimney, and the warm ruddy flicker of the fire casting shadows on the rough brown pine-logs; gazing and blinking, listening and thinking, one's thoughts perhaps wandering very far away, and getting less and less coherent. The storm chimes in with your fancies, mingles with your dreams, till with a start you open your eyes, and find to your astonishment the level rays of the rising sun lighting up a scene as calm and peaceful as if the tempest had never been.

In spring and summer the scene and climate are very different. Ice and snow and withered grass

have passed away, and everything is basking and glowing under a blazing sun, hot but always tempered with a cool breeze. Cattle wander about the plain—or try to wander, for they are so fat they can scarcely move. Water-fowl frequent the lakes. The whole earth is green, and the margins of the streams are luxuriant with a profuse growth of wild flowers and rich herbage. The air is scented with the sweet-smelling sap of the pines, whose branches welcome many feathered visitors from southern climes; an occasional humming-bird whirrs among the shrubs, trout leap in the creeks, insects buzz in the air; all nature is active and exuberant with life.

I and a Scotch gillie, who had accompanied me from home, took up our abode in a little log-shanty close to the ranch-house, and made ourselves very cosy. There was not much elegance or luxury in our domicile, but plenty of comfort. Two rough rooms — a huge fireplace in one of them—two beds, and no other furniture of any kind whatever, completed our establishment. But what on earth did we want with furniture? We were up before daylight, out hunting or fishing all day, had our food at the ranch, sat on the ground and smoked our pipes, and went to bed

early. One's rest is a good deal broken in winter time, and it is necessary to go to bed early in order to get enough sleep, because in very cold weather it is highly advisable to keep a fire burning all night; and, as yet, hunters have not evolved the faculty of putting on logs in their sleep. It would be most useful if they could do so; and, according to the law of evolution, some of them by this time ought to have done it. However, I was not much troubled; for Sandie, who slept by the fire, was very wakeful. I would generally awake about two or three in the morning to find the logs blazing and crackling merrily, and Sandie sitting in the ingle smoking his pipe, plunged in deep thought.

"Well, Sandie," I would say, "what kind of a night is it, and what are you thinking of?"

"Oh, well, it's a fine night, just a wee bit cheely outside (thermometer about 25° below zero); and I'm thinking we did not make that stalk after the big stag just right yesterday; and I'm thinking where we'll go to-day to find him." Then we would smoke a little—*haver* a little, as Sandie would call it—and discuss the vexed question of how we made the mistake with the big stag; and having come to a satisfactory conclusion, and

agreed that the stag had the biggest antlers that ever were seen—which is always the case with the deer you *don't* get—we would put out our pipes, and sleep till daylight warned us to set about our appointed task, which was to find a deer somehow, for the larder wanted replenishing.

In those days you had not far to seek for game, and you could scarcely go wrong in any direction at any season of the year. In winter and spring the Park still swarms with game; but it is necessary in summer to know where to look for it, to understand its manners and customs, to go further and to work harder than formerly, for Estes Park is civilised. In summer time beautiful but dangerous creatures roam the Park. The tracks of tiny little shoes are more frequent than the less interesting, but harmless, footprints of mountain sheep. You are more likely to catch a glimpse of the flicker of the hem of a white petticoat in the distance than of the glancing form of a deer. The marks of carriage wheels are more plentiful than elk signs, and you are not now so likely to be scared by the human-like track of a gigantic bear as by the appalling impress of a number eleven boot. That is as it should be. There is plenty of room elsewhere for wild beasts, and nature's

beauties should be enjoyed by man. I well remember the commencement of civilisation. I was sitting on the stoop of the log-shanty one fine hot summer's evening, when to me appeared the strange apparition of an aged gentleman on a diminutive donkey. He was the first stranger I had ever seen in the Park. After surveying me in silence for some moments he observed, "Say, is this a pretty good place to drink whisky in?" I replied "Yes," naturally, for I have never heard of a spot that was not favourable for the consumption of whisky, the State of Maine not excepted. "Well, have you any to sell?" he continued. "No," I answered, "got none." After gazing at me in melancholy silence for some moments, evidently puzzled at the idea of a man and a house but no whisky, he went slowly and sadly on his way, and I saw him no more.

On the morning that Sandie and I went out, it was not necessary to go far from the house. We had not ridden long before we came to likely looking country, got off, unsaddled and tethered our horses, and started on foot, carefully scanning the ground for fresh sign. Soon we came upon it—quite recently formed tracks of three or four deer. Then we had to decide upon the plan of opera-

tions in a long and whispered conversation; and finally, having settled where the deer were likely to be, and how to get at them, we made a long circuit, so as to be down wind of the game, and went to work. The ground to which I am referring is very rough. It slopes precipitously towards the river. Huge masses of rock lie littered about on a surface pierced by many perpendicular jagged crags, hundreds of feet high, and long ridges and spurs strike downward from the sheer scarp that crowns the cañon of the river, forming beautiful little glades—sheltered, sunny, clothed with sweet grass—on which the deer love to feed.

In such a country there was no chance of seeing game at any distance; so we had to go very cautiously, examining every sign, crawling up to every little ridge, and inch by inch craning our heads over and peering into every bush and under every tree. In looking over a rise of ground it is advisable for the hunter to take off his head-covering unless he wears a very tight-fitting cap. I have often laughed to see great hunters (great in their own estimation) raising their heads most carefully, forgetting that a tall felt hat, some six inches above their eyes, had already been for some time in view of the deer.

Many hunters seem to think that the deer cannot see them till they see the deer.

The sportsman cannot go too slowly, and it is better to hunt out one little gully thoroughly than to cover miles of ground in the day. If he walks rapidly he will scare heaps of deer, hear lots of crashing in the trees and scattering of stones, and perhaps see the whisk of a white tail, or the glance of a dark form, through the trees, but never get a shot for his pains. We pursued a different plan—took each little gulch separately, and carefully crept up it, searching every inch of ground, using redoubled caution towards the end where the bush is thickest, and especially scanning the north side; for, strange to say, deer prefer lying on the north side of valleys in the snow, even during the coldest weather, to resting on the warm sunny grass on the southern slopes. Patiently we worked; but our patience was not well rewarded, for not a sign of anything did we see till our entirely foodless stomachs and the nearly shadowless trees indicated that it was past noon. So we sat us down in a nice little sheltered nook, from whence we commanded a good view of the precipitous cliffs and gullies that led down to the tortuous and icebound creek, some thousands of feet below us, as well as of the face of

the mountain that reared itself on the opposite side, and betook ourselves to food and reflection. It is very pleasant to lie comfortably stretched out with nothing to do but to gaze with idle pleasure and complete content upon grand and varied scenery. The eye, now plunging into the abyss of blue crossed at intervals by swiftly moving clouds, now lowered and resting on the earth, pauses for a minute on the dazzling snow-white summits, then travels down through dark green pine woods, wanders over little open glades or valleys grey with withered grass, glances at steep cliffs and great riven masses of rock which time and weather have detached and hurled down the mountain side, and falls at last upon the pale green belt of aspens that fringes the river, white with snow where spanned with ice, but black as ink where a rapid torrent has defied the frost. Nor is the eye wearied with its journey; for mountain, valley, cliff, and glade are so mingled, and are so constantly changing with light and shade, that one could look for hours without a wish to move. The mind goes half asleep, and wonders lazily whether its body is really there in the heart of the Rocky Mountains leading a hunter's life, or whether it is not all a dream—a dream of schoolboy days which seemed at one time

so little likely to be realised, and yet which is at length fulfilled.

It must not be supposed that, because we were half asleep and wholly dreaming, we were not also keeping a sharp look-out; for in a man who is very much accustomed to take note of every unusual object, of every moving thing, and of the slightest sign of any living creature—more especially if he has roamed much on the prairies where hostile redskins lurk and creep—the faculty of observation is so constantly exercised that it becomes a habit unconsciously used, and he is all the time seeing sights, and hearing sounds, and smelling smells, and noting them down, and receiving all kinds of impressions from all external objects, without being the least aware of it himself. However, none of our senses were gratified by anything that betokened the presence of game, and, after resting a little while, we picked up our rifles and stole quietly on again. So we crept and hunted, and hunted and crept, and peered and whispered, and wondered we saw nothing, till the pine trees were casting long shadows to the east, when suddenly Sandie, who was a pace or two in front of me, became rigid, changed into a man of stone, and then, almost imperceptibly, a hair's-breadth at a time, stooped his head and sank down.

If you come suddenly in sight of game, you should remain perfectly motionless for a time, and sink out of sight gradually; for if you drop down quickly, the movement will startle it. Deer seem to be short-sighted. They do not notice a man, even close by, unless he moves. I never saw a man so excited at the sight of game, and yet so quiet, as Sandie. It seemed as if he would fly to pieces; he seized my arm with a grip like a vice, and whispered, "Oh, a great stag within easy shot from the big rock yonder! He has not seen me." So, prone upon the earth, I crawled up to the rock, cocked the rifle, drew a long breath, raised myself into a sitting position, got a good sight on the deer, pulled, and had the satisfaction of seeing him tumbling headlong down the gulch, till he stopped stone-dead jammed between two trees.

Leaving Sandie to prepare the stag for transportation, I started off as fast as I could, and brought one of the ponies down to the carcass. It was pretty bad going for a four-footed animal; but Colorado horses, if used to the mountains, will go almost anywhere. The way they will climb up places, and slither down places, and pick their way through "wind-falls," is marvellous. They seem to be possessed of any number of feet, and to put them

down always exactly at the right moment in the right place. I do not suppose they like it, for they groan and grunt the while in a most piteous manner. My pony was sure-footed and willing, and, moreover, was used to pack game; so we had little trouble with him, and before long had the deer firmly secured on the saddle and were well on our way home. It was well for us that we killed the deer in a comparatively accessible place, or we should not have got him in that night or the next day. It was almost dark when we topped the ridge, and could look down into the Park and see the range beyond, and there were plenty of signs there to show that a storm was at hand. Right overhead the stars were shining, but all the sky to the west was one huge wall of cloud. Black Cañon, the cañon of the river, and all the great rents in the range were filled with vapour, and all the mountains were wrapped in cloud.

When we left the ranch that night after a good supper, a game of euchre, and sundry pipes, it was pitch-dark, and light flakes of snow were noiselessly floating down to the earth; and, when we got up the next morning, behold! there was not a thing to be seen. Mountains, ranch-house, and everything else were blotted out by a densely falling

white, bewildering mass of snow. Towards noon it lightened up a little, and great grey shapes of mountains loomed out now and then a shade darker than the white wall that almost hid them ; but the weather was not fit for hunting, and, as there was nothing else to be done out of doors, we made a fête of it, as a French-Canadian would say, and devoted ourselves to gun-cleaning and spinning yarns.

When deep snow lies upon the higher grounds surrounding Estes Park, wapiti come down into the Park in considerable numbers. The wapiti is a splendid beast, the handsomest by far of all the deer tribe. He is called an elk in the States—why, I do not know ; for the European elk is identical with the American moose, and a moose and a wapiti are not the least alike. But I presume the wapiti is called by the Americans an elk for the same reason that they call thrushes robins, and grouse partridges. The reason, I dare say, is a good one, but I do not know what it is. The wapiti enjoys a range extending from the Pacific seaboard to the Mississippi, and from the north-west territory in British possessions down to Texas, and he formerly was found all the way across the continent and in the Eastern States. He is exactly like the European red deer—only about twice as large—carries mag-

nificent antlers, and is altogether a glorious animal. Wapiti are very shy. They require quiet and large undisturbed pastures; and they are hunted with a thoughtless brutality that must shortly lead to their extermination in civilised districts. They do not accustom themselves to civilisation as easily as do moose or antelope, but resent deeply the proximity of man—that is to say, of civilised man, for Indians do not interfere with them very much. Indians, as a rule, are not really fond of hunting; they hunt for subsistence, not for pleasure, and, where buffalo are to be found, never trouble their heads about smaller game. Elk are plentiful in any Indian country that suits them; in fact, as a rule, there is very little use in hunting wapiti in any country that is not exposed to Indian incursions, and the more dangerous the country, the better sport you are likely to have. But this is not an invariable rule. There are some places where wapiti may be found in quite sufficient numbers to repay a sportsman's labour, and where he need not incur the smallest risk to life or limb. I imagine there are more wapiti to be found in Montana and the adjacent territories than in any other part of the United States. Wapiti are to be met with in forests of timber, among the mountains, and on the

treeless prairie. They are, I think, most numerous on the plains, but the finest specimens are found in timbered districts. One might suppose that branching antlers would cause inconvenience to an animal running through the tangle of a primeval forest; but the contrary appears to be the case, for in all countries the woodland deer carry far finer heads than the stags of the same species that range in open country. The size of the antlers depends entirely on the food which the animal can procure. Where he is well fed, they will be well developed; where food is scarce, they will be small. In a timbered country there is more shelter than on the plains, the grass is not so deeply covered with snow in winter, and consequently food is more plentiful at that time of year, and the animal thrives better. You always find heavier deer in woodland than in an open country. Early in the fall the stags gather large herds of hinds about them; about the end of October they separate, and the big stags wander off alone for a while, and then later on join in with the big bands of hinds and small stags. During the winter they run in great numbers—it is not unusual to find herds of two or three hundred together, and I have seen, I believe, as many as a thousand different wapiti within a week. A large

herd of these grand animals is a magnificent sight, and one not soon to be forgotten. They are to be killed either by stalking them on foot, or partially on foot and partially on horseback, or by running them on horseback as you would run buffalo.

. . . . . .

Willie broke off here, for Noel the Indian was fast asleep. It is astonishing how these men can sleep when they have nothing else to do, and how well they can on necessity do without sleep; and Willie Whisper also began to look as if bedtime was near at hand. The fire was getting low. "I like that sketch," I said, "I like the description of scenery. It is grand, but not peaceful and comforting like your woods. And I like the natural history—not too much slaughtering of my fellow-creatures, and no killing just for killing's sake in the story either. Man must eat to live and must kill to eat, and we brethren of the woods seek our meat from God. But I wish it were otherwise."

"So do I," he answered drowsily, "and I think I could prove it, but you are sleepy and so am I, and I have talked enough for one night," and so wrapping our blankets round us we lay down to rest.

Provisions were getting low. I had not looked for a long delay in reaching my hunting camp, and

Willie Whisper was but scantily supplied. Of tea and sugar we had enough, but we were short of flour, and the little bit of fat pork was getting lamentably small. So the next day was spent in foraging. The proceeds of the chase did not amount to much—one porcupine, plenty of trout, and some cranberries—but it sufficed for present needs, and after supper Willie said :

" I agree with all you said last night about killing for the sake of killing. Though the hunting instinct is very strong in me I have never killed to waste, and I don't think I shall offend you if I give you another hunting yarn. I alluded last night to wapiti. I have hunted them in every way, and in every place in the woods, among the mountains, on the plains, stalked them on foot, stalked them on horseback, and run them. Shall I tell you about wapiti-running on the plains ? "

" Good," said I, " fire away."

WAPITI-RUNNING ON THE PLAINS

The first time I ever saw the head of a wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*) was at Chicago. I happened to be talking one day with General Sheridan, when a magnificent specimen arrived from one of the frontier forts as a present from the officer in command there. I had heard of these animals, but had looked upon them as mythological beasts. I had been so much disappointed in America in my search for large game, had heard so many rumours which turned out to be without the smallest foundation in fact, and had listened to so many stories of abundance of game which proved to be entirely illusory—the animals existing only in the vivid imagination of the story-tellers—that I had begun seriously to doubt whether any wapiti existed on the continent. The sight, however, of the pair of horns reassured me considerably, for obviously where one wapiti stag was to be found there was a reasonable chance of killing others, and my enthusiasm rising to fever heat on the closer inspection of the antlers, nothing would satisfy me but I must

be off at once to the fort. Accordingly I and my companion boarded a Western-bound train on the comfortable assurance that General ——, a man of his word, had promised to do all he could to help me.

It would be useless to enter into any description of the journey. The comfort of the Pullman cars, the discomfort of the heat and dust, the occasional bands of buffalo, the herds of antelope, the prairie dogs, the vast droves of Texan cattle and the picturesque cattle-boys that drive them, the long dreary stretches of prairie where the melancholy solitude is broken only by occasional little stations at which the train stops—are all familiar to everybody who has crossed the plains, and have been written about *ad nauseam*. Very curious are these small settlements, some of them consisting only of two or three mud, or rather adobe, houses, or of a few wooden shanties and a pumping-engine to supply water; others being large villages or small towns. They look as if Providence had been carrying a box of toy houses, and had dropped the lid and spilt out the contents on the earth. The houses have all come down right end uppermost, it is true, but otherwise they show no evidence of design: they are scattered about in every conceiv-

able direction, dumped down anywhere, apparently without any particular motive or reason for being so situated. The chief peculiarity noticeable about these little settlements and their inhabitants is that on the approach of a train everybody rushes to the front of his house and rings an enormous bell. I received quite an erroneous impression from this ceremony the first time I crossed the plains. I had read somewhere that the Chinese on the occasion of an eclipse or some natural phenomenon of that kind, which they attribute to the action of a malignant being, endeavour to drive away the evil influence by ringing bells, beating gongs, and making other hideous noises; and I thought that the unsophisticated inhabitants of these frontier towns, not having become accustomed to the passage of a train, looked upon it as some huge, horrible, and dangerous beast, and sought to drive it away by employing the same means as the Chinese. I found out afterwards, however, that the object of the bell-ringing was to induce travellers to descend and partake of hash.

At one of these lonely little stations I was deposited one fine evening in the early fall just before sundown. For a few moments only the place was all alive with bustle and confusion. The train

represented everything that was civilised, all the luxuries that could be carried in a train were to be found on board of it, the people were all clothed in fashionable dresses, it was like a slice cut out of one of the Eastern cities set down bodily in the midst of a perfect wilderness. In a few seconds it was gone, civilisation vanished with it, the station relapsed into its normal condition of desolation, and I found myself almost alone in the heart of the desert.

The day had been hot, and the air was resonant with the noise of crickets and cicali. The almost level prairie stretched out around me, fading away towards the east in interminable distances, while in the west the sun was just sinking behind a range of low sand-hills and bluffs. The air was still and calm, the sky perfectly cloudless, and the setting sun cast a faint delicate rosy hue over the sand and burnt sun-scorched herbage of the prairie, giving it the general tint and appearance of the Egyptian desert. It was very beautiful but somewhat melancholy, and I confess I felt rather blue and dismal as I watched the train vanishing in the distance; nor were my spirits roused by learning from the station-master that Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack had left the fort that very morning

on a hunting expedition. I had counted upon one or both of those famous scouts accompanying me, for General Sheridan had with characteristic kindness written to the officer commanding at the fort, requesting him to give me any assistance in his power, and if possible to let me have the valuable services of Mr. William Cody, otherwise Buffalo Bill, the government scout at the fort; and I began to inveigh against the bad luck that had arranged that he should go out hunting the very day I arrived. However, I had to "take it all back," for just as I was stepping into the ambulance wagon that was waiting to take us to the fort, two horsemen appeared in sight, galloping towards us, and the station-master sang out, "Say! hold on a minute, here are the very men you want, I guess." In another minute or two they cantered up, swung themselves out of the saddle, threw their bridles over a post, caught up their rifles, and stepped on to the platform. I thought I had never seen two finer-looking specimens of humanity, or two more picturesque figures. Both were tall, well-built, active-looking men, with singularly handsome features. Bill was dressed in a pair of corduroys tucked into his high boots, and a blue flannel shirt. He wore a broad-

brimmed felt hat, or sombrero, and had a white handkerchief folded like a little shawl loosely fastened round his neck, to keep off the fierce rays of the afternoon sun. Jack's costume was similar, with the exception that he wore moccasins, and had his lower limbs encased in a pair of comfortably greasy deer-skin trousers, ornamented with a fringe along the seams. Round his waist was a belt supporting a revolver, two butcher knives, and in his hand he carried his trusty rifle the "Widow." Jack, tall and lithe, with light brown close-cropped hair, clear laughing honest blue eyes, and a soft and winning smile, might have sat as a model for a typical modern Anglo-Saxon—if ethnologists will excuse the term. Bill was dark, with quick searching eyes, aquiline nose, and delicately cut features, and he wore his hair falling in long ringlets over his shoulders, in true Western style. As he cantered up, with his flowing locks and broad-brimmed hat, he looked like a picture of a Cavalier of olden times. Ah, well! it is years ago now since the day I first shook hands with Jack and Bill, and many changes have taken place since then. At that time neither of them had visited the States, nor been anywhere east of the Mississippi: they knew scarcely more of civilisation

and the life of great cities than the Indians around them. Afterwards they both went East and made money. Cody has, I believe, settled down on a ranch somewhere in Wyoming, and John Omohondro, better known as Texas Jack, has gone to other and better hunting grounds. Peace be with him; he was a good and kind friend to me, a cheery companion, as brave as a lion, as gentle as a woman, always ready for anything, always willing to work, cutting down mountains of difficulties into molehills, always in good humour, never quarrelling—a better hunting companion than Jack was in those days, or a more reliable friend, it would be hard to find. There was nothing mean about Jack; he was—to use one of his own Western phrases—a real *white* man. "Well," says Cody, after the ceremony of introduction had been got through, and we had made known our wishes and aspirations, "I guess we will both go along with you gents, if you like, and if I can get leave, and I don't know as there will be any trouble about that. You see Jack and I just started out this morning to get a load of meat, but there has been considerable of a fire down towards the forks, and scared all the game off; and as we had not got no stores with us for more than a day or two, we

concluded to come right back." "Oh Lord," I said; "the game all scared off, is it? what an infernal nuisance! it does not look a very cheerful country to ride about in without plenty of game to 'liven one up." "Never you mind about deer and elk," cried Jack; "you have no call to worry about that; we will find game enough if you can hit them; you think the prairie don't look cheerful, eh! Well it does seem kind of dismal, don't it, this time of year. Ah!" he added enthusiastically, "but you should see it in the summer, when the grass is all green, and the flowers is all ablowing, and the little birdies is a building of their nesties and boohooing around, and the deer are that fat they will scarcely trouble to get out of the way; and as to eating, they are just splendid, immense! I tell you; ain't they, Bill?" "Yes, sir, you bet your boots they are. But come on, Jack; let's fork our ponies and skin out for the fort; we don't want to stop here all night, anyhow. Good night, gentlemen; we will see you in the morning and fix that hunt all right, I guess." And so Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack "fork their ponies and skin out," while we bundle ourselves into the wagon and rattle off as fast as six seventeen hands high mules can tear to the

fort, where we were most kindly and hospitably received.

Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack were as fine specimens of their race and class as could anywhere be found; and that is saying a good deal, for honest hearts and stalwart frames and handsome features are not rare among the pioneers of Western civilisation. It might be supposed that these hunters, Indian-trackers, cattle-boys, and miners, are disagreeable people to come across. That is not the case at all. There are, of course, some rough characters, regular desperadoes, among them, and they occasionally shoot each other pretty freely in gambling quarrels and drunken sprees; but to a stranger who knows how to behave himself they are, as far as my experience goes, most civil and obliging. If a man is civil to them they will be civil to him, and if he does not interfere about their affairs they won't bother about his, unless he wants their assistance, and then they will be ready and willing to give it. The manly sense of independence, the self-respect, and that feeling of respect for others engendered by it, which so strongly characterise the American people, are as deeply marked and have as good an effect among the nomads of the West as in

any other class of the population. Of course if a man gives himself airs he must expect to pay for it. I remember rather an amusing instance of this. I had engaged a hunter and guide, a first-rate man, to accompany a friend of mine. The day before they were to start the guide came to me and said, "Now look here, friend. I ain't agoing to back out of this bargain, because I told you I'd go; but I ain't sweet upon the job, I tell you. I never come across a chap with such a lot of side on in my life, and I don't like it. However, I said I'd go, and I'm agoing; but I ain't agoing at the price I told you. I am going to charge him a dollar a day more." And so my friend enjoyed his expedition in blissful ignorance that he was paying four shillings and twopence a day extra for "side."

The next morning, after paying some visits and making some preliminary arrangements for a hunt, I wandered off a little distance and sat down on the trunk of a fallen cottonwood tree, and tried to realise that I was in the middle of those prairies that, thanks to Captain Mayne Reid, had haunted my boyish dreams. I cannot say that the realisation of my hopes fulfilled my expectation. I was oppressed with the vastness of the country,

the stillness and the boundlessness of the plains seemed to press like a weight upon my spirits, and I was not sorry to get back into the bustle and busy life of the fort. After a while, though, when I became accustomed to the plains, the feeling of depression of spirits which was at first occasioned by the monotony and quiet colouring of everything faded away, and the limitlessness of the prairie only impressed me with a feeling of freedom, and created rather an exhilaration of spirits than otherwise.

It was difficult in those days, and I suppose it is so now in most places, to enjoy much hunting on the plains without the assistance of the military. That assistance was never withheld if it could be given ; for among no class of people in any country in the world are the rites of hospitality better understood or more gracefully administered than among the officers of Uncle Sam's army. I always found them most courteous, kind, and obliging, ready to do anything in their power to help a stranger to see something of the country or to indulge in the pleasures of a hunt. I had no great difficulty therefore in obtaining permission to attach myself to a scouting party that was to leave the fort in a short time.

The next two or three days were spent in making preparations, buying stores, &c. I thought the days interminable. I was crazy to get out on the plains and see one of these great wapiti, and it appeared to me that everything could have been ready in half an hour's time. However, it was no use hurrying; one has to be philosophically patient and let things take their natural course. There is a regular routine to be observed in all these cases. At some places it takes you two days to fit out, at others three; sometimes you may strike a man accustomed to do things on short notice, and able to get everything ready in two or three hours. Then there are endless delays on the day of starting. Something is sure to be forgotten; girths or buckles break; perhaps one of the drivers has had a birthday, and is suffering a little from the effects of it, and cannot be induced to pull himself together and get started at all. In fact, you must make up your mind to be quite content if the first day's march consists only of a few miles, just enough to get beyond the radius of the last whisky shop, so as to be certain of making a clear, fair-and-square move on the succeeding day.

We got off pretty well, sent the wagons,

escort, tents, and things away shortly after noon, and started ourselves a couple of hours later. It was with a feeling almost of exultation that I at last found myself riding on the boundless prairie, the tall flagstaff, and the wooden houses of the fort fading in the distance, and before me nothing but the illimitable wilderness. After a short gallop, we overtook the outfit on the banks of the Platte, an extraordinary river, which consists at all seasons, except when in full flood, of a broad band of shifting, soft, and dangerous sand, with a little water trickling about in it. It is in some places miles in breadth. There was a kind of bridge, composed of numerous holes, with a few wattles and planks and trunks of rotten trees thrown across them, the whole structure being supported on rickety trestles; but it was in such a dangerous condition that we did not attempt to cross it, but preferred to ford the river, though the bed of it was strewn with wheels, axles, and fragments of wagons, a sight not very encouraging to the traveller. However, by dint of much hard swearing we got across, travelled a few miles on the other side, and camped close to the source of a little stream. Next morning shortly after daylight two or three of us started on ahead on the

route that the wagons were to follow, and an event occurred—we saw our first wapiti. Almost immediately after leaving camp I spied two or three gigantic objects, with horns like branching trees, surveying us from a sand-hill at a little distance. I was nearly frightened to death at the sight, they looked so enormous in the dim light, and although I had absolutely seen the head of an elk at Chicago, I still had lingering doubts as to their existence. We tried to ride round them, but it was no use: they had seen the camp, and made off before we could get anywhere within range. We travelled all the rest of that day without seeing anything more: it was intensely hot, and altogether the journey was not a very pleasant one. The heat was most oppressive, although it was late in October, for there was not a breath of wind, and the treeless prairie does not afford a particle of shade of any kind; being quite a green hand on the prairies, I was afraid to wander any distance from the wagons, lest I might lose myself; and I found riding behind a wagon all day in the broiling sun on a rough-paced broncho so tiresome that I was well pleased when the camping-place for the night hove in sight.

The country we traversed is peculiar; the soil

is of light sand, and the whole region is a vast series of sand-heaps. It looks as if the ocean in a violent gale—the height of the waves being exaggerated to some fifty or a hundred feet—had suddenly been arrested, solidified, and turned into sand. There are occasional level places, low bottoms, in which the water supplied by the winter snows and rains collects and remains some time after the great heats and droughts of summer have set in. These places are covered with a rank vegetation of tall grass, in which it is sometimes very difficult to force one's way on horseback; but generally the surface of the country is sand, either devoid of vegetation or covered with patches of coarse grass; and here and there are level tracts clothed with short, succulent, curling buffalo-grass. The wind has a great effect on the soft surface of the sand, and most of the hills have one side blown or scooped out, which makes the country somewhat dangerous to ride over, for one is apt, in galloping after some animal, to come suddenly upon a perpendicular cliff twenty or thirty feet high, the descent down which would result in broken bones for man and horse. The native horses are pretty well accustomed to this peculiarity of the country, and will stop suddenly, a proceeding which, though excellent and wise as

regards themselves, is apt to result in the discomfiture of the rider if he is new to the plains, and to cause him to describe a graceful parabola in the air, and fall down head foremost in the soft substance of the sand beneath. It is the easiest thing in the world to lose yourself in this broken sand-heapy country, for you will lose sight of the wagons when not a hundred yards from them, and not see them until you are right on the top of them again. There is of course no kind of road or track of any sort; you simply travel in the direction which you wish to go, choosing the best line of country you can find.

We camped that night on Little Sandy Creek, the south branch of the east fork of the western arm of one of the larger tributaries of the North Platte. It was on the next day's march that the first elk was killed. I was riding alone a little to the left of the wagons, much alarmed at not having them constantly in view, but still so anxious to get a shot that I ventured to keep off a little way. I had adopted by this time the manners and customs of the native hunter, which consist in going up cautiously to the crest of a sand-hill, looking over inch by inch, and occasionally going to the top of the highest point in the neighbourhood and taking a good survey round with a pair of field-

glasses. At last I was rewarded. Quietly craning my head over a sand-ridge, I saw lying at the bottom, not more than a couple of hundred yards from me, what looked at first like a great tangled mass of dry white sticks. It turned out to be the heads of three wapiti stags lying down close together. I managed without much difficulty to get a little nearer to them, left my horse, crawled up to the brow of the nearest ridge, got a fine shot, and fired. I hate taking a lying shot, and it would have been better in this case if I had roused the animals up; however, I fired at one as he lay, and struck him, but not fatally, and they all got up and made off. Noticing that one was wounded, I jumped on my horse and followed him. I speedily came up to him, for he was severely hit, dismounted, fired another shot, and laid him on the sand. He was not a very large stag, in fact he had a small head, but I thought him the most magnificent animal I had ever seen in my life. Fortunately for me, Buffalo Bill, who heard the shots and saw the wapiti making off, followed them and came to my assistance, helped me to cut him up, and after taking some meat on our saddles, brought me safely and speedily back to the wagons. The river we camped on is a good-sized stream. It flows through

a generally flat country, but partially composed, as I have already said, of sand-hills and steep bluffs. Its course is the most peculiar I have ever seen in any river; it twists and twines in a most miraculous manner, forming loops and figures of eight, and every kind of geometrical figure that can be made by curves. Two bends of the river will approach each other till they are separated only by a little neck of land a few yards in width, and then go away for ever so far, sweeping back again in such a manner that I should think a man in a canoe might have to travel twenty miles to accomplish a distance of perhaps two or three miles in a straight line by land.

Where the stream has cut through high sand-hills or bluffs the banks are of course precipitous, almost perpendicular, but as a general rule there is a margin some hundred yards or so in width between the edge of the stream and the high steep hills which form the banks of the river. Through these hills, composed of loose sand and other soft materials, winter rains have worn deep gullies, large enough to be termed cañons, precipitous valleys leading up from the river, at right angles to its general course, to the level of the plain, and from these valleys other and smaller cañons branch off

in all directions, forming a labyrinth of steep precipitous gullies.

These cañons, and indeed every crack and cranny below the level of the prairie, are thickly timbered with cypress; in other words, the natural wood grows everywhere where it is not subjected to the continually recurring prairie fires which desolate the region, and wherever it is sheltered from the cutting blast of wintry winds, almost as destructive in their effects as fire. The river is fordable in most places as far as depth of water is concerned, but the bottom is very treacherous, consisting generally of soft shifting quicksand. We pitched our camp in a nice sheltered situation, not far from the head of one of the cañons leading down to the river, near enough to the stream to be able to water our horses without inconvenience, and sufficiently close to the plain to get a good look out over the surrounding country without having to go too far.

It was a pleasant and convenient camp, and we should have been very comfortable if we had not suffered so much from cold at night; but unfortunately for us summer turned suddenly into winter, a violent snowstorm came on, and for a few days after it we felt the cold very severely. We had

plenty of buffalo rugs and blankets, it is true, but there is a limit to the number of blankets that are useful; a dozen will not keep a man any warmer than half a dozen, or half a dozen than two or three. I do not like sleeping in great cold; it necessitates lying so still. The only chance is to get into bed, roll yourself well up in your blankets and buffalo robes while the tent is warm, see that there is no cranny or hole anywhere by which the air can penetrate, and then lie perfectly quiet. You will experience a most oppressive and inconvenient amount of heat at first, which it is very difficult to put up with, for it is almost impossible to resist the desire to kick off the clothes and get cool, but the temptation must be resisted, and you must lie perfectly still—even if you boil—otherwise your chance of a comfortable night is gone. If you succeed in going to sleep, you will find, when you wake after three or four hours, that though the cold is intense your body still contains a considerable amount of caloric; you must then pull the blankets completely over your head, just leaving a little hole through which to obtain a scanty supply of fresh air, and remain in that position till you get up in the morning. It makes an enormous difference to your bodily heat having your head inside the blan-

kets, but it is not pleasant. In the morning you will find your air-hole encrusted with a thick coating of ice, and your body by that time thoroughly cold and stiff, from lying so long in one position. However, that is one of the discomforts of hunting that has to be put up with.

We scoured the country for the first couple of days in vain, seeing nothing, not even a fresh sign. On the third afternoon we—that is, myself and a friend and Buffalo Bill—were riding along, somewhat dispirited, a little in the rear of Texas Jack, who had gone on ahead and had disappeared round a hill. Presently we caught sight of him again on a little bluff at some distance from us. He had dismounted, and was running round and round on all fours, making such extraordinary antics that I imagined he had gone suddenly insane, till Buffalo Bill explained that he was merely indicating to us in the language of the plain that there was some wapiti in sight and pretty near. So we approached him very cautiously, and looking over the edge of the bluff saw a sight which I shall never forget—a herd of at least 120 or 130 wapiti on the little plain below close to the edge of the river. They looked magnificent, so many of these huge deer together. There were not many good heads among

them, however, the herd consisting chiefly of hinds and young stags. They were in such a position that we could not make a good stalk upon them, and as it was getting late in the afternoon we determined to try and drive them, and so, after posting Jack and my friend in two favourable positions, Buffalo Bill and I went round to try and creep as near the wapiti as we could. I did get two or three unfavourable shots, and missed, but the other two men were more fortunate, for they shot three elk out of the herd as they ran by.

Next morning, a little before sunrise, I was awaked as usual by hearing scratch, scratch, against the canvas of my tent door. "Come in," I said, with a sleepy and somewhat sulky voice at being disturbed, for I could feel by the stiffened and frozen condition of the blankets about my mouth that it was a very cold morning, and I was still tolerably warm. My "come in" was answered by the appearance of Jack's jolly cheerful face as he undid the strings that tied the tent door, and came in, rubbing his hands and stamping his feet. "Good morning," says Jack; "it's about time to get up, it's a fine large morning, and going to be a great day for hunting." "All right, Jack, I will be up in a minute. In the meantime there is the

pannikin, and there is the keg." Jack, like most prairie men, invariably introduced himself to the Sun-god with a copious libation of whisky. To take a big drink of raw whisky in the morning, and to touch nothing more during the rest of the day, appears to me a most extraordinary perversion of principle. However, it is a part of the manners and customs of the country, and may be adapted to that peculiar region. I have often tried to acquire the habit, but have never succeeded. It is true that to take one drink of whisky in the morning induces modified intoxication for the whole of the day, and it is therefore an economical habit; but it makes a man so unpleasantly drunk that he is apt to become a nuisance to himself and a terror to his friends. After Jack had tossed off his tot of whisky with the customary salutation, "How," to which we replied with the polite rejoinder, "Drink hearty," we crawled out of our blankets and began to dress ourselves; that is to say, to undress ourselves, for we slept with more clothes on than we wore in the daytime; and then, having taken our drams in the shape of coffee, and gone through the slight ceremonial that answers to the getting-up of civilised life, we turned out, watered our horses, and started, accompanied by the captain in command of the scouting party.

The captain, however, had a mishap, which necessitated his returning to camp, for in crossing a stream his horse took fright, reared, and fell back in the water. The result was that on emerging from the river the gallant captain took upon himself the appearance of a knight of old clad in a complete and glittering armour of ice. In a few moments his clothes were frozen and stiff as a board, and he had to gallop home, get himself wrapped up in blankets, and the circulation restored by external friction and internal applications of hot whisky and water.

We rode for a long time, keeping a general direction down stream, but on the high ground on the banks of the river, without seeing anything or a sign of anything.

About noon I at last caught a glimpse of some objects a long way off, on the side of a steep bluff. It is very hard to take a good view of a distant object on a cold winter's day from the top of an exposed hill, with the wind blowing through and through one, and one's eyes watering and one's benumbed hands shaking the glasses in a most inconvenient manner. And we were unable for some time to determine the nature of the animals, but at length made out that they were elk, and not what he feared

at first they might be, Indians. As soon as we had made the joyful discovery we mounted our horses, and galloped off, making a long circuit down wind, so as to come upon the game from the proper direction. Jack's instinct as a hunter stood us in good stead on this occasion. He brought us round beautifully to the exact spot where the deer lay, which was an exceedingly difficult thing to do, considering that when we first saw them they were four or five miles off, and were lying on a sand-hill exactly like hundreds and thousands of other sand-hills that surrounded us in every direction. There was not even the slightest landmark to point out the position of the elk, and having once got on our horses we never saw the ı till Jack brought us within a few hundred yards of the herd.

I had no idea where we were, when Jack said, "Now be mighty careful in going up this hill, and keep your eyes skinned: we ought to be able to see elk from the top." Accordingly we rode our horses up inch by inch, stooping down on their necks whenever we moved, and halting every two or three steps, and gradually raising our heads, so as to be sure of catching sight of the game before they saw us. When we discovered the deer, we found they were lying on the opposite hill-side, out of shot,

and we had to make another detour in order to get closer up; and finally, having reached a place from whence we expected to be within easy range, we dismounted, gave our horses in charge to two soldiers who had accompanied us, and prepared to make a start on foot. It was not pleasant ground for crawling, covered as it was in patches with dwarf cacti, horrible little vegetable nuisances about the size of a cricket ball, covered with spikes that penetrate through moccasins into the soles of your feet, and fill your hands and knees till they look like pincushions. They go in easily enough, but being barbed at the end, they won't come out again. They are a great trouble to dogs. I had a collie with me that became so disgusted with these cacti, that if he found himself among patches of them, he would howl and yell with terror before he was hurt at all. They are very detrimental also to the human hunter, but of course it is better to be as covered with prickles as is the fretful porcupine than to miss a chance at a big stag; and so, in spite of cacti, we crawled on our hands and knees, and after a while flat upon our waistcoats, till we got to the crest of the hill, and there found ourselves within two hundred yards of the game. We could not tell how large the herd was, for not more than

twenty wapiti were in sight. Having mutually settled what we were to do, in a few hurried whispers, we selected each man his deer, fired all together, and loaded and fired again as fast as we could. Wapiti are so stupid that when they do not get your wind, or see you, they will bunch up together and stand, poor things, some little time in a state of complete terror, uncertain which way to run or what to do, and we got several shots into them before they started, and when at length they did set off they went in such a direction that we were able to cut them off again by running across at an angle. We did so, and, making another careful stalk upon them, found them all gathered together, looking about in all directions, and quite bewildered at being unable to see or smell the danger to which they were exposed. Signalling our horses to come up, we got three or four more shots at the elk before they made up their minds to start, and when at last they did get under way, we rushed to meet the horses, threw ourselves into the saddle, and started full gallop after them.

Fortune again befriended us, for the deer ran round a steep bluff, and, by taking the other side of the hill, we succeeded in cutting them off again, and rode in right on the top of the herd, yelling and

shouting to frighten them. In running Wapiti on horseback, the great thing is to get among them suddenly at great speed, and to scare them as much as possible. If you succeed in doing that, they get winded, and with a good horse you will be able to keep up with them for some little distance; but if you let them get started gradually at their own pace, you have no more chance of coming up with them than with the man in the moon. However, this time we charged in among the herd, and kept up with them a long way. What became of the others I don't know, for I was too fully occupied with myself to take any notice of them. I rode in upon fifty or sixty of the huge beasts, kept my horse galloping right along with them, and loaded and fired as fast as I could, occasionally rolling over a deer. Presently I singled out a big stag, the best I could see, and devoted myself to him. With the usual cowardice of his sex, he thrust himself in among the hinds, and I had great difficulty in getting at him at all. Finally, I got a good broadside shot at him, but missed, for it is not an easy thing to hit a deer at full gallop with your own horse at full gallop also; in fact it is about as hard a thing to do as a man can attempt in the way of shooting, particularly as, owing to the peculiarly dangerous

nature of the ground, a man has to keep his eyes open, and cannot devote his entire attention to the animal he is pursuing, or even to his own horse. However, I stuck to my deer, though he doubled and turned in all directions, and at last by a lucky shot rolled him over like a rabbit, a fact which I announced by a yell which I should think must have been heard in settlements.

As soon as I had done for him, I took after the rest of the herd, or rather the largest portion of the herd, for the main body of deer had broken up into several parties, and followed a little bunch of perhaps twenty or thirty, loading and firing, and every now and then bowling over a wapiti. I went on till my rifle fell from my hands through sheer exhaustion, and stuck in the sand, muzzle downwards. That of course stopped my wild career. Then I got off my horse, which was completely blown and stood with his legs wide apart, his nostrils quivering, his flanks heaving, pouring with sweat, and loosened his girths. I felt in pretty much the same condition, for it is hard work running elk on horseback; so, having first extracted my rifle from its position in the sand, I led my horse slowly up to the top of a sand-hill, turned his head to the fresh vivifying

wind, and sat down. I had not the remotest idea of where I was, how long I had been running the elk, how many I had killed, or anything else; the excitement I had been in for the last half-hour or so was so great that I felt quite bewildered, and scarcely knew what had happened. It was natural that I should not know where I was, for the oldest hand will get turned round after running even buffalo on the prairie; and elk are much worse than buffalo, for the latter will generally run tolerably straight, but the former go in circles, and double, and turn back on their tracks, and go in any direction it suits them. I was utterly and completely lost as far as finding my way back to camp was concerned, and I began all at once to feel a sense of dismalness creep over me. A sudden reaction set in after the great excitement I had enjoyed. Only a few seconds before I had been careering at full gallop over the prairie, shouting from sheer exuberance of spirits, every nerve in a state of intense excitation, the blood coursing madly through every artery and vein, every muscle and sinew strained to the uttermost, bestriding an animal in an equal state of excitement, and pursuing a herd of flying creatures, all instinct with life and violent movement. In a second it was all

gone. Like a flash the scene changed. The wapiti disappeared as if by magic. There was not a living creature of any kind to be seen, and the oppressive silence was unbroken by the faintest sound. I looked all around the horizon; not a sign of life; everything seemed dull, dead, quiet, unutterably sad and melancholy. The change was very strange, the revulsion of feeling very violent and not agreeable. I experienced a most extraordinary feeling of loneliness, and so having stopped a few minutes to let my horse get his wind, and to recover my faculties a little, I got on my exhausted steed, cleaned the sand out of my rifle, slowly rode up to the top of the highest sand-hill in the neighbourhood, and there sat down again to look about me. I dare say the reader will ask, "Why did not you take your back track, and so find your way?" I should have tried that of course in time, but it is not an easy matter to follow one's footmarks when the whole country is ploughed up and tracked over with the feet of flying animals, and I had in all probability been describing curves, crossing my trail many times; so I sat me down on the top of my sand-hill and waited.

After what seemed to me an intolerable time,

probably nearly half an hour, I saw, in the distance, a little black spot crawling up a high sand-hill and remaining stationary at the top, and by the aid of my glass I made out a man and a horse. The man and horse remained where they were; I also did not stir; and in a few minutes more I had the pleasure of seeing in another direction another man and horse climbing to the top of a sand-hill. I felt sure they were my friends, for we had always settled among ourselves that if we got separated in running elk or buffalo, or anything, each man should get to the top of the highest point he could find, wait there some little time, and in this way we should be sure to get together again; and so after fixing well in my eye the position of the first man I had seen, I got on my horse and started in that direction. After a bit I rode up another high sand-hill to take an observation, and finding my friend still in the same place, continued my way towards him. In about an hour we had all got together again, and after briefly giving each other an account of our success, we struck out for the end of the track where I had left my stag, and took the trail back. Such a scene of slaughter I had never viewed before; for two or three miles the dead elk lay

thick upon the ground; it was like a small battle-field; a case of prairie murder, as the captain said. By Jove, how we did work that afternoon, gralloching the deer! It was dark by the time we had got through our task, and with bent and aching backs and blunted knives had returned to camp, about the dirtiest, most blood-stained, hungriest, happiest, most contented, and most disreputable-looking crowd to be found anywhere in the great territories of the West. I shall never participate in such a day's sport as that again. It was wonderful, because it partook of the double nature of stalking and running on horseback, for we had our stalk first, and killed five or six wapiti on foot, and then we had our run and killed a lot more. The next two days we were busily engaged in cutting up the meat with axes and taking it into camp, for it must not be supposed that an ounce of all that meat was wasted; we hauled every bit of it out to the fort, where the demand for fresh venison greatly exceeded our supply.

The worst of killing so much game in a short time is that it brings one's hunt to a premature end. We had got all the meat we could carry, and there was nothing for us to do but hitch up

our teams and drive back to settlements. Two or three days after our return the fort had a narrow escape of being burned up in the night by a prairie fire of unusual magnitude. The fire originated a long way off, down on the Republican river, but there was a stiff breeze blowing at the time, and it travelled with most amazing swiftness towards us. While it was still miles and miles away the whole sky was lit up with a fierce lurid glare, and as it soon became evident that it was coming in our direction, energetic measures were at once taken to fight the foe. All the troops, consisting, if I remember right, of eight companies of infantry and two or three troops of cavalry, were ordered out, and every other able-bodied man in the fort was requisitioned. The fire bore down upon us from the south with awful speed and overwhelming power. It was terrifying but grand to see it coming. The country to the south is very hilly, with long valleys leading down towards the fort. The fire would work its way comparatively slowly up a hill, and then pausing as it were for a moment on the brink, would be caught by the wind and hurled down the slope with a roar that could be heard miles away. It poured down the valleys with a rush, tossing a spray of flames twenty or

thirty feet high into the air, like as if a vast pent-up flood of molten metal had suddenly burst its barriers and spread over the plain. No living creature that walks the earth, however fleet of foot, could have escaped the fierce onslaught of those flames. The approach of the fire was not uniform and regular, but was affected by every change and flaw of wind; sometimes it would move slowly, with a loud crackling noise like that made by a bundle of dry sticks burning; then it would come tearing on in leaps and bounds, devouring the earth and roaring like a huge furnace. Occasionally a great body of fire advanced steadily in one direction for some time, till, checked by some change of wind, it would die down altogether, or move on in some other course; but, in spite of occasional deflections of this kind, the general drift of the fire was straight towards us, and it soon became painfully evident that unless the enemy could be checked or turned aside the fort was doomed. Fire is an awful foe, but the men met it gallantly—advancing in line, commanded by their officers, as if moving against a living enemy, only, instead of being armed with sabre and rifle, they carried water-buckets and blankets. As soon as they got as near as the intense heat

would allow them, they set to work burning broad strips of grass before the advancing flames. It is of course impossible to cope with the fire itself, no creature could stand near it for a moment and live; the only way to deal with it is to burn the ground in front of the object you want to save, so that when the fire comes down to the burned and bare place it shall be forced, from want of fuel, to turn aside. That sounds simple enough, but in the case I am thinking of it was difficult and dangerous work. The grass was very high, dry as tinder, and with a strong gale blowing it was no easy matter to keep in check the flames that were lit on purpose. The men had to keep on firing the grass and beating down the flames with blankets, and firing it further on and beating it down again, until a strip of burned ground, so broad that it could not be overleaped by the flames, was interposed between the fire and the fort. It is hard to imagine anything more hellish than that scene. The heat was intense, the sky glowed lurid, red with the reflection of the flames, the fire poured down towards us as if it would devour everything in its way, and between us and the flames, standing out clear and distinct against the intense bright light, was the fighting line,

wild-looking figures waving coats and blankets as they furiously beat the flames, men rushing to and fro and mounted officers galloping up and down the rank. After some hours' incessant hard work, they beat the fire, thrust it on one side, and saved the fort; but it was a very, very narrow escape, for the flames passed awfully close to the hay-yard, where a whole winter's supply of forage was stacked. A few yards nearer, and the hay must have ignited, and if that had once caught fire nothing could have saved the stables and all the other buildings in the place. There was no actual danger to life, for the barrack square of hard bare earth was sufficiently large to have afforded shelter and safety to all the human beings in the fort; but the horses would probably have perished, and the stores, and barracks, and officers' quarters, and in fact the whole settlement, would have been burned to ashes. The fire travelled some 200 miles that night, destroyed a lot of cattle, leaped over two or three good-sized streams, and was finally arrested in its devastating course by a large river.

We remained some time in that country, made several expeditions from the fort, had many little adventures, and enjoyed much good sport,

but never again had such a run after wapiti as that which I have endeavoured to describe. Circumstances must be very favourable to ensure a good run after elk: the ground must be tolerably hard, or else there is no chance whatever, and you must be able to get near enough to the game unseen to enable you to burst in upon them at the first spurt, otherwise you will never get up with them at all. I remember once chasing a wounded stag nearly all day along with a friend who was hunting with me and a government scout. It was most ludicrous: we got within about 300 yards of him, and do what we would we could get no nearer. We followed in this way for hours, till our horses were completely blown, and eventually killed him, because the deer himself became exhausted through loss of blood, just as our horses were giving out. The scout had got within a hundred yards or so, and was just pulling up his completely played-out horse, when the deer stood still for a moment, which gave the man time to slip out of the saddle and finish him with a lucky shot. He was a fine stag, with a good pair of horns. A nice chase he gave us, and a nice job we had to get back to camp that night. We were completely lost, had been running round

and round, up and down, in and out, for hours, and it was more by good luck than good management that we hit upon the river and got safe home.

The prairie is the place to go to if you want to make a big bag, but for true sport commend me to the forest and the hills. To me at least there is infinitely more charm in stalking wapiti among the mountains, in the magnificent scenery to be found there, than in running them on the plains. The plains, although they give one a sense of freedom and a certain exaltation from their immensity, yet are dismal and melancholy, and running elk, although intensely exciting, is scarcely a legitimate and sportsmanlike way of hunting such a noble beast. But in the mountains, stalking elk, picking out a good stag and creeping up to him, is as fine a sport as can be obtained anywhere in the world; in fact, it is like deerstalking in Scotland, with everything in grand proportions, mountains many thousand feet in height instead of hills of a few hundred, and a magnificent animal weighing 600 or 800 pounds instead of a comparatively small deer which would not turn the scale at twenty stone.

Wapiti used to be, and I suppose still are,

plentiful in all the mountainous regions of the Western Territories. They were very numerous formerly in that portion of Colorado with which I am best acquainted, namely, Estes Park and the mountains and valleys surrounding it; but now that the Park is settled up their visits are comparatively rare. The flat country used to be full of them in autumn, they would run among the cattle, and apparently take little notice of them; but chasing them with hounds has made them very shy, and now they do not often come down except in winter, when deep snow upon the range compels them to seek pasturage on the lower grounds. Still, there are even now plenty of them in the neighbourhood, and wapiti can always be found with a little trouble at any season of the year.

Thirty years ago Estes Park was a hunter's paradise. Not only were all the wild beasts of the continent plentiful, but the streams also were alive with trout, as for the matter of that they are still; and we often devoted a day to fishing, by way of varying our sport and obtaining a little change of diet. In summer there was nothing peculiar about the method of fishing; we used artificial flies, or live grasshoppers, and caught multitudes of trout,

for they generally took the fly so well that I never remember finding myself in the position of the gentleman who was heard complaining to a friend that he had been "slinging a five and twenty cent bug,[1] with a twenty foot pole, all day, and had not had nary bite"; and on the rare occasions on which they did not rise freely at the artificial insect, you were pretty sure to get them with a live "hopper." There is another advantage also in using the last-mentioned bait, namely, that it assures a double amount of sport and labour, for catching grass-hoppers is a great deal harder work than hooking trout. But in winter we had to fish through holes in the ice, and that is a somewhat peculiar proceeding. The first time I ever fished trout through the ice was in the Park. Three of us started off one fine bright winter's morning, and rode about ten or twelve miles up the main creek, to a place near some beaver dams where trout were said to be plentiful, carrying with us an axe, a sack, some twine and hooks, a bit of raw pork, and of course our rifles. Having dismounted, tied up my horse, and selected

[1] The Americans have retained the original meaning of the word "bug," and apply it to various insects: for instance, a daddy-long-legs, fire-fly, or lady-bird would be called a straddle bug, a lightning bug, or a lady bug. The peculiar reptile which has monopolised the term among us is distinguished in the States by prefixing the name of that article of furniture in which he loves to lurk, and where his presence murders sweet repose.

what I thought was a likely looking spot, I set to work to cut through the ice, while my companions rode some way further up the stream.

I cut and chopped and got pretty warm, for it is no joke cutting through two feet of solid ice, and, after some labour, struck down upon an almost dry gravel bed. I repeated the same operation the second time to my great disgust; but on the third attempt the axe went suddenly through into deep water. You know something about it, and will agree with me that the proper way to set to work is to chop a square hole, taking pains to cut down very evenly; the improper way is to do as I did the first time—cut carelessly, get down deeper on one side of the square than on the other, suddenly strike the axe through, and get the hole full of water, while yet there are several inches of ice to be cut through. If anyone will try chopping ice in a hole two feet deep and full of water, he will discover that the splashing, though graceful to look at, is not comfortable to feel in cold weather. Fishing through the ice is chilly and depressing work. I mean such fishing as I am thinking of when you are exposed to all the keen airs of heaven, a solitary shivering mortal out all alone in the wilderness. Of course if two young persons go out fishing for

Tommy-cods, as they occasionally do on the St. Lawrence, through a hole in the ice, with a nice little hut built over it, and a nice little stove inside, why things are quite different.

I cannot say that fishing through the ice under ordinary circumstances is very exciting sport, but there is something comical about it, and it affords a certain amount of innocent enjoyment. When I rejoined my pals that evening, I could not forbear laughing at the peculiar appearance of the winter trout-fisher as represented by a staid, respectable member of society, who looked as if he ought to be engaged in some learned or scientific pursuit or dressed in good broadcloth, and poring over his books in some well-filled library. His costume was remarkable. His feet were protected by voluminous moccasins stuffed with many woollen socks; his legs encased in dingy and somewhat greasy corduroys; his body in an ancient, blood-stained, weather-beaten jacket, with two or three pieces of old sacking or gunny bags hung on the shoulders, and strapped round the waist to keep off the wind; an ordinary deerstalking cap, with pieces filched from a buffalo robe sewn on the ear-flaps, pulled over the brows and tied under the chin, and a long and tattered woollen muffler wound round and

round the neck, allowed little of the fisherman's face to be seen, except a nose, purple with cold, from which hung a little icicle, and a pair of eyes gazing intently at the hole in the ice over which he stooped. Patiently he crouched over his fishing hole, occasionally stirring up the water to keep it from freezing, holding in his hand a fishing-rod in the shape of a stick about a foot long, from which depended a piece of thick twine attached to a hook armed with the eye of a deceased trout as a bait. At intervals he would twitch out a fish, pull him violently off the hook—a man cannot employ much delicacy of manipulation when his hands are encased in thick fingerless mittens—and throw him on a heap of his forerunners in misfortune, where he speedily froze solid in the very act of protesting by vigorous contortions against his cruel fate. We caught I should be ashamed to say how many dozen trout on that occasion. I know we had the best part of a sackful, but as to the exact size of the sack I propose to retain a strict reserve, lest I should be accused of taking a mean advantage of that noble little fish the trout.

On the way home we shot a mountain sheep. We came suddenly and unexpectedly upon three of them, started our host of the ranch Griff Evan's

huge hound Plunk after them, jumped off our horses, and put out up the mountain on foot after the dog. What a pace those sheep went up that mountain, and what a pace old Plunk went up after them, and what a ludicrously long way behind we were left! It made one quite ashamed of being a man to see the manner in which the sheep and the dog got away up the mountain and out of sight before we had panted and perspired up a few hundred feet. We might have saved ourselves the trouble of climbing, for presently down came one of the sheep, followed closely by Plunk and preceded by a small avalanche of rattling gravel and bounding stones, in such a hurry that he as nearly as possible ran between the legs of one of the sportsmen. The animal passed literally within two yards of him with such startling effect that he had no time to do anything but fire his rifle off in the air in a kind of vague and general way. Plunk stuck to the sheep gallantly, and pressed him so hard that he went to bay in the bed of the river, at a place where the water rushes foaming down a steep descent among a mass of huge boulders, and there he met his fate.

. . . . . .

"That was my first experience," said Willie, "with *Ovis Montana*, the bighorn or mountain

sheep. I don't think I care for hunting big game with hounds. I'd rather pit my intelligence and cunning and senses against those of my quarry in a solitary stalk. But the mere mention of mountain sheep opens the flood-gates of memories, and I will tell you more about them some other night if you so please. In the meantime, don't you think it is about time for bed? I only hope my wapiti-running has not sunk me in your estimation to the level of an inhuman hunter thirsting for blood. Such slaughter, the prairie looking like a battlefield! I hate it. The hunting instinct is dead in me and I have no lust for blood."

"But I can understand the wild excitement," I rejoined, "and how the fierce instincts of God knows how many ancestral generations of men living by the chase may under such excitement be evoked; and you wasted nothing. Had those noble beasts been left to wolves and foxes I could not have forgiven it. But the meat was wanted and was used. That saves your face. Sleep in peace."

The morning broke clear, hard and cold. Not a shred of cloud, not a breath of soft air from the south gave promise of a change, and we spent a quiet uneventful day.

It wanted about two hours to sundown when the thin sound of distant voices reached us through the still crisp air, and presently the party foreseen by Willie Whisper came into camp. He proved accurate in his vision. The party consisted of two English gentlemen novices in the woods, and three countrymen—"habitants" as they would be styled in Quebec—conducting them on a hunting trip. They had, as Willie suggested, run down the stream in two birch-bark canoes to the little chain of lakes, where, finding the ice too thick to permit of attempting to break a passage for so fragile a structure as a birch-bark, they had "cached" their canoes and stores, and tramped across the cranberry marshes to the disused lumber camp in which we had taken up our temporary abode. The afternoon passed busily in helping to make the newcomers—guests in a sort of way—comfortably at home. Cheerily it passed also, for they brought some luxuries in their packs, flour, tea and sugar, a little keg of butter, and a littler one of whisky. By nightfall we had all settled down to wait for a thaw with what patience we could command. Willie Whisper stayed with us during the cold snap, and took his share and contributed his share of shelter, warmth, and

food. The guides knew him by reputation, and welcomed the chance of hearing a yarn from him; for if he was in one of his silent moods no one could get anything out of him at all.

"Well, gents," said the elder of the two guides when we had finished supper that night, "your Indian says this frost ain't set in for good, and I guess he ought to know. But it looks like we were going to be stuck up in this old shanty in the middle of a cranberry swamp for some days with nothing to do but chop wood. I and my partner are taking these two gents in to try and get a moose. It's a kind of new job for us. I was sent in a couple of months ago to report upon a patch of likely looking timber, and my partner here to look at a place where some durned fool thought he had found gold. Now we are after moose and caribou. We go into these cursed swamps and woods for business. The gents go for pleasure. Now I don't suppose our business experiences would interest you, but if you, sir" (turning to Willie), "would tell us what took you in for pleasure, and where the pleasure comes in, why, if agreeable to you it would be agreeable to me and my partner, and it would be interesting I am sure to these two gents,

who are going in hunting for the first time. Any way, it would pass the time and keep us from quarrelling for want of something else to do. What do you say to spinning us a yarn ? "

" Well," said Willie Whisper, " I've hunted a bit in the woods, among the mountains and on the great plains, and the memory of those hunts is pretty fresh. But as to the pleasure to be found in hunting, you must judge of that for yourselves. Some people find no pleasure where there is no profit. To others the mere fact that there is no profit constitutes half the pleasure. Well, here goes. What shall I begin with ? You two gentlemen are about to have your first experience of the Canadian woods, so I may as well make a start with moose-hunting in Canada."

It would be tedious to allude to the episodes of each recurring day. The daylight hours were short in the ordinary routine of an idle camp—cooking, eating, foraging for food, trout and a few spruce partridges, cleaning guns, mending moccasins, cutting firewood, and so on. I will just recount the substance of the yarns that were spun night after night before the red fire.

MOOSE-HUNTING IN CANADA

Moose-hunting, if it has no other advantages, at least leads a man to solitude and the woods, and life in the woods tends to develop many excellent qualities which are not invariably produced by what we are pleased to call our civilisation. It makes a man patient, and able to bear constant disappointments; it enables him to endure hardship with indifference, and it produces a feeling of self-reliance which is both pleasant and serviceable. True luxury, to my mind, is only to be found in such a life. No man who has not experienced it knows what an exhilarating feeling it is to be entirely independent of weather, comparatively indifferent to hunger, thirst, cold, and heat, and to feel himself capable not only of supporting but of enjoying life thoroughly, and that by the mere exercise of his own faculties. Happiness consists in having few wants and being able to satisfy them, and there is more real comfort to be found in a birch-bark camp than

in the most luxuriously furnished and carefully appointed dwelling.

Such a home I have often helped to make. It does not belong to any recognised order of architecture, although it may fairly claim an ancient origin. To erect it requires no great exercise of skill, and calls for no training in art schools. I will briefly describe it.

A birch-bark camp is made in many ways. The best plan is to build it in the form of a square, varying in size according to the number of inhabitants that you propose to accommodate. Having selected a suitable level spot and cleared away the shrubs and rubbish, you proceed to make four low walls composed of two or three small suitable-sized pine logs laid one on the other, and on these little low walls so constructed you raise the framework of the camp. This consists of light thin poles, the lower ends being stuck into the upper surface of the pine trees which form the walls, and the upper ends leaning against and supporting each other. The next operation is to strip large sheets of bark off the birch trees, and thatch these poles with them to within a foot or two of the top, leaving a sufficient aperture for the smoke to escape. Other poles are then laid upon the sheets of birch bark to keep

them in their places. A small doorway is left in one side, and a door is constructed out of slabs of wood or out of the skin of some animal. The uppermost log is hewn through with an axe, so that the wall shall not be inconveniently high to step over, and the hut is finished. Such a camp is perfectly impervious to wind or weather, or rather can be made so by filling up the joints and cracks between the sheets of birch bark and the interstices between the pine logs with moss and dry leaves. You next level off the ground inside, and on three sides of the square strew it thickly with the small tops of the *sapin* or Canada-balsam fir, for a breadth of about four feet; then take some long pliant ash saplings or withy rods, and peg them down along the edge of the pine tops to keep your bed or carpet in its place, leaving a bare space in the centre of the hut, where you make your fire. Two or three rough slabs of pine to act as shelves must then be fixed into the wall, a couple of portage-straps or tump-lines stretched across on which to hang your clothes, and the habitation is complete.

I ought perhaps to explain what a "portage-strap" and a "portage" are. Many French and Spanish words have become incorporated with the

English language in America. The western cattleman or farmer speaks of his farm or house as his "ranch," calls the enclosure into which he drives his stock a "corral," fastens his horse with a "lariat," digs an "acequia" to irrigate his land, gets lost in the "chapparal" instead of the bush; and uses commonly many other Spanish words and expressions. No hunter or trapper talks of hiding anything; he "caches" it, and he calls the place where he has stowed away a little store of powder, flour, or some of the other necessaries of life, a "cache." The French word "prairie," as everybody knows, has become part and parcel of the English language. Indians and half-breeds, who never heard French spoken in their lives, greet each other at meeting and parting with the salutation "bo jour" and "adieu." And so the word "portage" has come to be generally used to denote the piece of dry land separating two rivers or lakes over which it is necessary to carry canoes and baggage when travelling through the country in summer. Sometimes it is literally translated and called a "carry." Another French word, "traverse," is frequently used in canoeing, to signify a large unsheltered piece of water which it is necessary to cross. A deeply

laden birch-bark canoe will not stand a great deal of sea, and quite a heavy sea gets up very rapidly on large fresh-water lakes, so that a long "traverse" is a somewhat formidable matter. You may want to cross a lake, say, five or six miles in width, but of such a size that it would take you a couple of days to coast all round. That open stretch of five or six miles would be called a "traverse."

The number and length of the portages on any canoe route, and the kind of trail that leads over them, are important matters to consider in canoe travelling. A man in giving information about any journey will enter into most minute particulars about them. He will say, "You go up such and such a river," and he will tell you all about it—where there are strong rapids; where it is very shallow; where there are deep still reaches in which the paddle can be used, and where you must pole, and so forth. Then he will tell you how you come to some violent rapid or fall that necessitates a "portage," and explain exactly how to strike into the eddy, and shove your canoe into the bank at a certain place, and take her out there, and how long the "portage" is; whether there is a good trail, or a bad trail, or no trail at all; and so on with every "portage" on the route. Carrying canoes and

baggage across the "portage" is arduous work. A birch-bark canoe must be treated delicately, for it is a very fragile creature. You allow it to ground very carefully; step out into the water, take out all the bales, boxes, pots, pans, bedding, rifles, &c.; lift up the canoe bodily, and turn her upside down for a few minutes to drain the water out. The Indian then turns her over, grasps the middle thwart with both hands, and with a sudden twist of the wrists heaves her up in the air, and deposits her upside down on his shoulders, and walks off with his burden. An ordinary-sized Micmac or Melicite canoe, such as one man can easily carry, weighs about 70 or 80 lbs., and will take two men and about 600 or 700 lbs.

The *impedimenta* are carried in this manner. A blanket, doubled to a suitable size, is laid upon the ground; you take your portage-strap, or tump-line as it is sometimes called, which is composed of strips of webbing or some such material, and is about twelve feet long, a length of about two feet in the centre being made of a piece of broad soft leather; you lay your line on the blanket so that the leather part projects, and fold the edges of the blanket over either portion of the strap. You then pile up the articles to be

carried in the centre, double the blanket over them, and by hauling upon the two parts of the strap bring the blanket together at either side, so that nothing can fall out. You then cut a skewer of wood, stick it through the blanket in the centre, securely knot the strap at either end, and your pack is made. You have a compact bundle with the leather portion of the portage-strap projecting like a loop, which is passed over the head and shoulders, and the pack is carried on the back by means of the loop which passes across the chest. If the pack is very heavy, and the distance long, it is usual to make an additional band out of a handkerchief or something of that kind, to attach it to the bundle, and pass it across the forehead, so as to take some of the pressure off the chest. The regular weight of a Hudson's Bay Company's package is 80 lbs.; but any Indian or half-breed will carry double this weight for a considerable distance without distress. A tump-line, therefore, forms an essential part of the *voyageur's* outfit when travelling, and it comes in handy also in camp as a clothes-line on which to hang one's socks and moccasins to dry.

A camp such as that I have attempted to

describe is the best that can be built. An ordinary camp is constructed in the same way, but with this difference, that instead of being in the form of a square it is in the shape of a circle, and the poles on which the bark is laid are stuck into the ground instead of into low walls. There is not half so much room in such a camp as in the former, although the amount of material employed is in both cases the same. It may be objected that the sleeping arrangements cannot be very luxurious in camp. A good bed is certainly an excellent thing, but it is very hard to find a better bed than Nature has provided in the wilderness. It would appear as if Providence had specially designed the Canada-balsam fir for the purpose of making a soft couch for tired hunters. It is the only one, so far as I am aware, of the coniferous trees of North America in which the leaves or *spiculæ* lie perfectly flat. The consequence of that excellent arrangement is that a bed made of the short tender tips of the Canada balsam, spread evenly to the depth of about a foot, is one of the softest, most elastic, and most pleasant couches that can be imagined; and as the scent of the sap of the Canada balsam is absolutely delicious, it is always sweet and

refreshing—which is more than can be said for many beds of civilisation.

Hunger is a good sauce. A man coming in tired and hungry will find more enjoyment in a piece of moose meat and a cup of tea than in the most luxurious of banquets. Moreover it must be remembered that some of the wild meats of North America cannot be excelled in flavour and delicacy; nothing, for instance, can be better than moose or caribou, mountain sheep or antelope. The "moufle," or nose of the moose, and his marrow bones, are dainties which would be highly appreciated by the most accomplished epicures. The meat is good, and no better method of cooking it has yet been discovered than the simple one of roasting it before a wood fire on a pointed stick. Simplicity is a great source of comfort, and makes up for many luxuries; and nothing can be more simple, and at the same time more comfortable, than life in such a birch-bark camp as I have attempted to describe. In summer time and in the fall, until the weather begins to get a little cold, a tent affords all the shelter that the sportsman or the tourist can require. But when the leaves are all fallen, when the lakes begin to freeze up, and snow covers the

earth, or may be looked for at any moment, the nights become too cold to render dwelling in tents any longer desirable. A tent can be used in winter, and I have dwelt in one in extreme cold, when the thermometer went down as low as 32° below zero. It was rendered habitable by a little stove, which made it at the same time exceedingly disagreeable. A stove sufficiently small to be portable only contained wood enough to burn for an hour and a half or so. Consequently some one had to sit up all night to replenish it. Now, nobody could keep awake, and the result was that we had to pass through the unpleasant ordeal of alternately freezing and roasting during the whole night. The stove was of necessity composed of very thin sheet iron, as lightness was an important object, and consequently when it was filled with good birch wood and well under way, it became red-hot, and rendered the atmosphere in the tent insupportable. In about half an hour or so it would cool down a little, and one would drop off to sleep, only to wake in about an hour's time shivering, to find everything frozen solid in the tent, and the fire nearly out. Such a method of passing the night is little calculated to ensure sound sleep. In the depth of winter it is quite

impossible to warm a tent from the outside, however large the fire may be. It must be built at such a distance that the canvas cannot possibly catch fire, and hence all heat is dispersed long before it can reach and warm the interior of the tent. It is far better to make a "lean-to" of the canvas, build a large fire, and sleep out in the open. A "lean-to" is easily made and scarcely needs description. The name explains itself. You strike two poles, having a fork at the upper end, into the ground, slanting back slightly; lay another fir pole horizontally between the two, and resting in the crutch; then place numerous poles and branches leaning against the horizontal pole, and thus form a framework which you cover in as well as you can with birch bark, pine boughs, pieces of canvas, skins, or whatever material is most handy. You build an enormous fire in the front, and the camp is complete. A "lean-to" must always be constructed with reference to the direction of the wind; it serves to keep off the wind and a certain amount of snow and rain. In other respects it is, as the Irishman said of the sedan-chair with the bottom out, more for the honour and glory of the thing than anything else. For all practical purposes you are decidedly out of doors.

Although the scenery of the greater part of Canada cannot justly be described as grand or magnificent, yet there is a weird, melancholy, desolate beauty about her barrens, a soft loveliness in her lakes and forest glades in summer, a gorgeousness of colour in her autumn woods, and a stern, sad stateliness when winter has draped them all with snow, that cannot be surpassed in any land. I remember, as distinctly as if I had left it but yesterday, the beauty of the camp from which I made my first successful expedition after moose one calling season. I had been out several times unsuccessfully, sometimes getting no answer at all; at others, calling a bull close up, but failing to induce him to show himself; sometimes failing on account of a breeze springing up, or of the night becoming too much overcast and cloudy to enable me to see him. My companions had been equally unfortunate. We had spent the best fortnight of the season in this way, and had shifted our ground and tried everything in vain. At last we decided on one more attempt, broke camp, loaded our canoes, and started. We made a journey of two days, traversing many lovely lakes, carrying over several portages, and arrived at our destination about three o'clock in the

afternoon. We drew up our canoes at one of the prettiest spots for a camp I have ever seen. It lay beside a little sheltered secluded bay at the head of a lovely lake, some three or four miles in length. The shores near us were covered with "hardwood" trees—birch, maple, and beech, in their glorious autumn colours; while the more distant coasts were clothed with a sombre dark mass of firs and spruce. Above the ordinary level of the forest rose at intervals the ragged gaunt form of some ancient and gigantic pine that had escaped the notice of the lumberman, or had proved unworthy of his axe. In front of us and to the right, acting as a breakwater to our harbour, lay a small island covered with hemlock and tamarack trees, the latter leaning over in various and most graceful angles, overhanging the water to such an extent as sometimes to be almost horizontal with it. Slightly to the left was a shallow spot in the lake marked by a growth of rushes, vividly green at the top, while the lower halves were of a most brilliant scarlet, affording the precise amount of warmth and bright colouring that the picture required. It is extraordinary how everything seems to turn to brilliant colours in the autumn in these northern latitudes. The

evening was perfectly still; the surface of the lake, unbroken by the smallest ripple, shone like a mirror and reflected the coast-line and trees so accurately that it was impossible to tell where water ended and land began.

The love of money and the love of sport are the passions that lead men into such scenes as these. The lumberman, the salmon fisher, and the hunter in pursuit of large game, monopolise the beauties of nature in these Canadian wilds. The moose (*Cervus Alces*) and caribou (*Cervus rangifer*) are the principal large game to be found in Canada. The moose is by far the biggest of all existing deer. He attains to a height of quite 18 hands, and weighs about 1200 pounds or more. The moose of America is almost, if not quite, identical with the elk of Europe, but it attains a greater size. The horns especially are much finer than those to be found on the elk in Russia, Prussia, or the Scandinavian countries.

The moose has many advantages over other deer, but it suffers also from some terrible disadvantages, which make it an easy prey to its great and principal destroyer, man. Whereas among most, if not all, the members of the deer tribe, the female has but one fawn at a birth, the

cow moose generally drops two calves—which is much in favour of the race. The moose is blessed with an intensely acute sense of smell, with an almost equally acute sense of hearing, and it is exceedingly wary and difficult of approach. On the other hand, it is but little fitted to move in deep snow, owing to its great weight. Unlike the caribou, which has hoofs specially adapted for deep snow, the moose's feet are small compared with the great bulk of the animal. If, therefore, it is once found and started when the snow lies deep upon the ground, its destruction is a matter of certainty; it breaks through the snow to solid earth at every step, becomes speedily exhausted, and falls an easy prey to men and dogs. Again, a large tract of land is necessary to supply food for even one moose. In summer it feeds a good deal upon the stems and roots of water-lilies, but its staple food consists of the tender shoots of the moose-wood, ground-maple, alder, birch, poplar, and other deciduous trees. It is fond of ground-hemlock, and will also occasionally browse upon the *sapin* or Canada balsam, and even upon spruce, though that is very rare, and I have known them when hard pressed to gnaw bark off the trees. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are nearly

"settled up." More and more land is cleared and brought under cultivation every day; more and more forest cut down year by year; and the moose-supporting portion of the country is becoming very limited in extent. On the other hand, the moose is an animal which could easily be preserved if only reasonable laws could be enforced. It adapts itself wonderfully to civilisation. A young moose will become as tame as a domestic cow in a short time. Moose become accustomed to the ordinary noises of a settled country with such facility that they may sometimes be found feeding within a few hundred yards of a road. A railway does not appear to disturb them at all. I have shot moose within sound of the barking of dogs and the cackling of geese of a farmhouse, in places where the animals must have been constantly hearing men shouting, dogs barking, and all the noises of a settlement. Their sense of hearing is developed in a wonderful degree, and they appear to be possessed of some marvellous power of discriminating between innocent sounds and noises which indicate danger. On a windy day, when the forest is full of noises —trees cracking, branches snapping, and twigs breaking—the moose will take no notice of all

these natural sounds; but if a man breaks a twig, or, treading on a dry stick, snaps it on the ground, the moose will distinguish that sound from the hundred voices of the storm, and be off in a second.

Why it is that the moose has developed no peculiarity with regard to his feet, adapting him especially to the country in which he dwells, while the caribou that shares the woods and barrens with him has done so in a remarkable degree, I will leave philosophers to decide. In the caribou the hoofs are very broad and round, and split up very high, so that, when the animal treads upon the soft surface of the snow, the hoofs spreading out form a natural kind of snow-shoe, and prevent its sinking deep. The frog becomes absorbed towards winter, so that the whole weight of the animal rests upon the hoof, the edges of which are as sharp as a knife, and give the animals so secure a foothold that they can run without fear or danger on the slippery surface of smooth glare ice. Now the moose, on the contrary, is about as awkward on the ice as a shod horse, and will not venture out on the frozen surface of a lake if he can help it. His feet are rather small and pointed, and allow him to sink

and flounder helplessly in the deep snows of mid-winter and early spring.

There are several ways in which the moose is hunted; some legitimate and some decidedly illegitimate. First of all there is moose-calling, which to my mind is the most interesting of all woodland sports. It commences about the beginning of September, and lasts for about six weeks, and consists in imitating the cry of the female moose, and thereby calling up the male. This may sound easy enough to do, especially as the bull at this season of the year loses all his caution, or the greater part of it. But the pastime is surrounded by so many difficulties, that it is really the most precarious of all the methods of pursuing or endeavouring to outwit the moose; and it is at the same time the most exciting. I will endeavour to describe the method by giving a slight sketch of the death of a moose in New Brunswick woods last year.

It was early in October. We had pitched our tents—for at that season of the year the hunter dwells in tents—upon a beautiful hardwood ridge, bright with the painted foliage of birch and maple. The weather had been bad for calling, and no one had gone out, though we knew there

were moose in the neighbourhood. We had cut a great store of firewood, gathered bushels of cranberries, dug a well in the swamp close by, and attended to the thousand and one little comforts that experience teaches one to provide in the woods, and had absolutely nothing to do. The day was intensely hot and sultry, and if any one had approached the camp about noon he would have deemed it deserted. All hands had hung their blankets over the tents by way of protection from the sun, and had gone to sleep. About one o'clock I awoke, and sauntered out of the tent to stretch my limbs and take a look at the sky. I was particularly anxious about the weather, for I was tired of idleness, and had determined to go out if the evening offered a tolerably fair promise of a fair night. To get a better view of the heavens I climbed to my accustomed look-out in a comfortable fork near the summit of a neighbouring pine, and noted with disgust certain little black shreds of cloud rising slowly above the horizon. To aid my indecision I consulted my dear old friend John Williams, the Indian, who after the manner of his kind stoutly refused to give any definite opinion on the subject. All that I could get out of him was, "Well, dunno;

mebbe fine, mebbe wind get up; guess pretty calm, perhaps, in morning. Suppose we go and try, or praps mebbe wait till to-morrow." Finally I decided to go out; for although if there is the slightest wind it is impossible to call, yet any wise and prudent man, unless there are unmistakable signs of a storm brewing, will take the chance; for the calling season is short and soon over.

I have said that an absolutely calm night is required for calling, and for this reason: the moose is so wary that in coming up to the call he will invariably make a circle down wind in order to get scent of the animal which is calling him. Therefore, if there is a breath of wind astir, the moose will get scent of the man before the man has a chance of seeing the moose. A calm night is the first thing necessary. Secondly, you must have a moonlight night. No moose will come up in the daytime. You can begin to call about an hour before sunset, and moose will answer up to, say, two hours after sunrise. There is very little time, therefore, unless there is bright moonlight. In the third place, I need scarcely observe that to call moose successfully you must find a place near camp where there are moose to call, and where there are not only moose, but bull

moose; not only bull moose, but bulls that have not already provided themselves with consorts; for if a real cow begins calling, the rough imitation in the shape of a man has a very poor chance of success, and may as well give it up as a bad job. Fourthly, you must find a spot that is convenient for calling, that is to say, a piece of dry ground, for no human being can lie out all night in the wet, particularly in the month of October, when it freezes hard towards morning. You must have dry ground well sheltered with trees or shrubs of some kind, and a tolerably open space around it for some distance; open enough for you to see the bull coming up when he is yet at a little distance, but not a large extent of open ground, for no moose will venture out far on an entirely bare exposed plain. He is disinclined to leave the friendly shelter of the trees. A perfect spot, therefore, is not easily found. Such are some of the difficulties which attend moose-calling, and render it a most precarious pastime. Four conditions are necessary, and all four must be combined at one and the same time.

Having once determined to go out, preparations do not take long. You have only to roll up a blanket and overcoat, take some tea, sugar, salt,

and biscuit, a kettle, two tin pannikins, and a small axe, with, I need scarcely say, rifle and ammunition. The outfit is simple; but the hunter should look to everything himself, for an Indian would leave his head behind if it were loose. A good thick blanket is very necessary, for moose-calling involves more hardship and more suffering from cold than any other branch of the noble science of hunting with which I am acquainted. It is true that the weather is not especially cold at that time of year, but there are sharp frosts occasionally at night, and the moose-caller cannot make a fire by which to warm himself, for the smell of smoke is carried a long way by the slightest current of air. Neither dare he run about to warm his feet, or flap his hands against his sides, or keep up the circulation by taking exercise of any kind, for fear of making a noise. He is sure to have got wet through with perspiration on his way to the calling place, which of course makes him more sensitive to cold.

So I and the Indian shouldered our packs, and started for the barren, following an old logging road. Perhaps I ought to explain a little what is meant by a "logging road" and a "barren." A logging road is a path cut through the forest in

winter, when the snow is on the ground and the lakes are frozen, along which the trunks of trees or logs are hauled by horses or oxen to the water. A logging road is a most pernicious thing. Never follow one if you are lost in the woods, for one end is sure to lead to a lake or a river, which is decidedly inconvenient until the ice has formed; and in the other direction it will seduce you deep into the inner recesses of the forest, and then come to a sudden termination at some moss-covered decayed pine-stump, which is discouraging. A "barren," as the term indicates, is a piece of waste land; but, as all hunting grounds are waste, that definition would scarcely be sufficient to describe what a "barren" is. It means in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick an open marshy space in the forest, sometimes so soft as to be almost impassible, at other times composed of good solid hard peat. The surface is occasionally rough and tussocky, like a great deal of country in Scotland.

In Newfoundland there are barrens of many miles in extent, high, and, comparatively speaking, dry plateaux; but the barrens in the provinces I am speaking of vary from a little open space of a few acres to a plain of five or six miles in length

or breadth. There has been a good deal of discussion as to the origin of these "barrens." It appears to me that they must have been originally lakes which have become dry by the gradual elevation of the land, and through the natural processes by which shallow waters become choked up and filled with vegetable debris. They have all the appearance of dry lakes. They are about the size of the numerous sheets of water that are so frequent in the country. The forest surrounds them completely, precisely in the same way as it does a lake, following all the lines and curvatures of the bays and indentations of its shores; and every elevated spot of dry solid ground is covered with trees exactly as are the little islands that so thickly stud the surfaces of the Nova Scotian lakes. Most of the lakes in the country are shallow, and in many of them the process by which they become filled up can be seen at work. The ground rises considerably in the centre of these barrens, which is, I believe, the case with all bogs and peat mosses. I have never measured any of their areas, neither have I attempted to estimate the extent of the curvature of the surface; but on a barren where I hunted last year, of about two miles across, the ground rose so much in the centre

that when standing at one edge we could see only the upper half of the pine trees which grew at the other. The rise appeared to be quite gradual, and the effect was as if one stood on an exceedingly small globe, the natural curvature of which hid the opposite trees.

To return to our calling. We got out upon the barren, or rather upon a deep bay or indentation of a large barren, about four o'clock in the afternoon, and made our way to a little wooded island which afforded us shelter and dry ground, and which was within easy shot of one side of the bay, and so situated with regard to the other that a moose coming from that direction would not hesitate to approach it. The first thing to be done is to make a lair for oneself—a little bed. You pick out a nice sheltered soft spot, chop down a few sapin branches with your knife, gather a quantity of dry grass or bracken, and make as comfortable a bed as the circumstances of the case will permit.

Having made these little preparations, I sat down and smoked my pipe while the Indian climbed up a neighbouring pine tree to "call." The only object of ascending a tree is that the sound may be carried further into the recesses of the forest.

The instrument wherewith the caller endeavours to imitate the cry of the cow consists of a cone-shaped tube made out of a sheet of birch bark rolled up. This horn is about eighteen inches in length and three or four in diameter at the broadest end, the narrow end being just large enough to fit the mouth. The "caller" uses it like a speaking-trumpet, groaning and roaring through it, imitating as well as he can the cry of the cow moose. Few white men can call really well, but some Indians by long practice can imitate the animal with wonderful success. Fortunately, however, no two moose appear to have precisely the same voice, but make all kinds of strange and diabolical noises, so that even a novice in the art may not despair of himself calling up a bull. The real difficulty—the time when you require a perfect mastery of the art—is when the bull is close by, suspicious and listening with every fibre of its intensely accurate ear to detect any sound that may reveal the true nature of the animal he is approaching. The smallest hoarseness, the slightest wrong vibration, the least unnatural sound, will then prove fatal. The Indian will kneel on the ground, putting the broad end of the horn close to the earth so as to deaden the sound, and with an agonised expres-

sion of countenance will imitate with such marvellous fidelity the wailing, anxious, supplicating cry of the cow, that the bull, unable to resist, rushes out from the friendly cover of the trees, and exposes himself to death. Or it may be that the most accomplished caller fails to induce the suspicious animal to show himself: the more ignoble passion of jealousy must then be aroused. The Indian will grunt like an enraged bull, break dead branches from the trees, thrash his birch-bark horn against the bushes, thus making a noise exactly like a moose fighting the bushes with his antlers. The bull cannot bear the idea of a rival, and, casting his prudence to the winds, not unfrequently falls a victim to jealousy and rage.

The hunter calls through his horn, first gently, in case there should be a bull very near. He then waits a quarter of an hour or so, and, if he gets no answer, calls again a little louder, waiting at least a quarter of an hour—or half an hour some Indians say is best—after each attempt.

The cry of the cow is a long-drawn-out melancholy sound, impossible to describe by words. The answer of the bull moose, on the contrary, is a rather short guttural grunt, and resembles at a great distance the sound made by an axe chopping

wood, or that which a man makes when pulling hard at a refractory clay pipe. You continue calling at intervals until you hear an answer, when your tactics depend upon the way in which the animal acts. Great acuteness of the sense of hearing is necessary, because the bull will occasionally come up without answering at all; and the first indication of his presence consists of the slight noise he makes in advancing. Sometimes a bull will come up with the most extreme caution; at others he will come tearing up through the woods, as hard as he can go, making a noise like a steam-engine, and rushing through the forest apparently without the slightest fear.

On the particular occasion which I am recalling, it was a most lovely evening. It wanted but about half an hour to sundown, and all was perfectly still. There was not the slightest sound of anything moving in the forest except that of the unfrequent flight of a moose-bird close by. And so I sat watching that most glorious transformation scene—the change of day into night; saw the great sun sink slowly down behind the pine trees; saw the few clouds that hovered motionless above me blaze into the colour of bright burnished gold; saw the whole atmosphere become glorious with a soft

yellow light, gradually dying out as the night crept on, till only in the western sky there lingered a faint glow fading into a pale cold apple-green, against which the pines stood out as black as midnight, and as sharply defined as though cut out of steel. As the darkness deepened, a young crescent moon shone out pale and clear, with a glittering star a little below the lower horn, and above her another star of lesser magnitude. It looked as though a supernatural jewel—a heavenly pendant, two great diamond solitaires, and a diamond crescent—were hanging in the western sky. After a while, the moon too sank behind the trees, and darkness fell upon the earth.

I know of nothing more enchanting than a perfectly calm and silent autumnal sunset in the woods, unless it be the sunrise, which to my mind is more lovely still. Sunset is beautiful, but sad; sunrise is equally beautiful, and full of life, happiness, and hope. I love to watch the stars begin to fade, to see the first faint white light clear up the darkness of the eastern sky, and gradually deepen into the glorious colouring that heralds the approaching sun. I love to see nature awake shuddering, as she always does, and arouse herself into active, busy life; to note the insects, birds,

and beasts shake off slumber and set about their daily tasks.

Still, the sunset is inexpressibly lovely, and I do not envy the condition and frame of mind of a man who cannot be as nearly happy as man can be, when he is lying comfortably on a luxurious and soft couch, gazing in perfect peace on the glorious scene around him, rejoicing all his senses, and saturating himself with the wonderful beauties of a northern sunset.

So I sat quietly below, while the Indian called from the tree-top. Not a sound answered to the three or four long-drawn-out notes with which he hoped to lure the bull; after a long interval he called again, but the same perfect, utter silence reigned in the woods, a silence broken only by the melancholy hooting of an owl, or the imaginary noises that filled my head. It is extraordinary how small noises become magnified when the ear is kept at a great tension for any length of time, and how the head becomes filled with all kinds of fictitious sounds; and it is very remarkable also how utterly impossible it is to distinguish between a loud noise uttered at a distance and a scarcely audible sound close by. After listening very intently amidst the profound silence of a quiet night in the forest for

an hour or so, the head becomes so surcharged with blood, owing, I presume, to all the faculties being concentrated on a single sense, that one seems to hear distant voices, the ringing of bells, and all kinds of strange and impossible noises. A man becomes so nervously alive to the slightest disturbance of the almost awful silence of a still night in the woods, that the faintest sound—the cracking of a minute twig, or the fall of a leaf, even at a great distance—will make him almost jump out of his skin. He is also apt to make the most ludicrous mistakes. Towards morning, about daybreak, I have frequently mistaken the first faint buzz of some minute fly, within a foot or so of my ear, for the call of moose two or three miles off.

About ten o'clock the Indian gave it up in despair and came down the tree; we rolled ourselves up in our rugs, pulled the hoods of our blanket coats over our heads, and went to sleep. I awoke literally shaking with cold. It was still the dead of night; and the stars were shining with intense brilliancy, to my great disappointment, for I was in hopes of seeing the first streaks of dawn. It was freezing very hard, far too hard for me to think of going to sleep again. So I roused the Indian and suggested that he should try another call or two.

Accordingly we stole down to the edge of the little point of wood in which we had ensconced ourselves, and in a few minutes the forest was re-echoing the plaintive notes of the moose. Not an answer, not a sound—utter silence, as if all the world were dead! broken suddenly and horribly by a yell that made the blood curdle in one's veins. It was the long, quavering, human, but unearthly scream of a loon on the distant lake. After what seemed to me many hours, but what was in reality but a short time, the first indications of dawn revealed themselves in the rising of the morning star, and the slightest possible paling of the eastern sky. The cold grew almost unbearable. That curious shiver that runs through nature—the first icy current of air that precedes the day—chilled us to the bones. I rolled myself up in my blanket and lighted a pipe, trying to retain what little caloric remained in my body, while the Indian again ascended the tree. By the time he had called twice it was grey dawn. Birds were beginning to move about, and busy squirrels to look out for their breakfast of pine-buds. I sat listening intently, and watching the blank emotionless face of the Indian as he gazed around him, when suddenly I saw his countenance blaze up with vivid excite-

ment. His eyes seemed to start from his head, his muscles twitched, his face glowed, he seemed transformed in a moment into a different being. At the same time he began with the utmost celerity, but with extreme caution, to descend to the ground. He motioned me not to make any noise, and whispered that a moose was coming across the barren and must be close by. Grasping my rifle, we crawled carefully through the grass, crisp and noisy with frost, down to the edge of our island of woods, and there, after peering cautiously around some stunted juniper bushes, I saw standing, about sixty yards off, a bull moose. He looked gigantic in the thin morning mist which was beginning to drift up from the surface of the barren. Great volumes of steam issued from his nostrils, and his whole aspect, looming in the fog, was vast and almost terrific. He stood there perfectly motionless, staring at the spot from which he had heard the cry of the supposed cow, irresolute whether to come on or not. The Indian was anxious to bring him a little closer, but I did not wish to run the risk of scaring him, and so, taking aim as fairly as I could, considering I was shaking all over with cold, I fired and struck him behind the shoulder. He plunged forward on his knees,

jumped up, rushed forward for about two hundred yards, and then fell dead at the edge of the heavy timber on the far side of the barren.

We went to work then and there to skin and clean him, an operation which probably took us an hour or more, and, having rested ourselves a few minutes, we started off to take a little cruise round the edge of the barren and see if there were any caribou on it. I should explain that "cruising" is in the provinces performed on land as well as at sea. A man says he has spent all summer "cruising" the woods in search of pine timber, and if your Indian wants you to go out for a walk, he will say, "Let us take a cruise around somewhere." Accordingly, we trudged off over the soft yielding surface of the bog, and, taking advantage of some stunted bushes, crossed to the opposite side, so as to be well down wind in case any animals should be on it. The Indian then ascended to the top of the highest pine-tree he could find, taking my glasses with him, and had a good look all over the barren. There was not a thing to be seen. We then passed through a small strip of wood, and came out upon another plain, and there, on ascending a tree to look round, the Indian espied two caribou feeding towards the timber. We had to wait some little

time till they got behind an island of trees, and then, running as fast as the soft nature of the ground would permit, we contrived to get close up to them just as they entered the thick woods, and, after an exciting stalk of about half an hour, I managed to kill both.

Having performed the obsequies of the chase upon the two caribou, we returned to our calling-place. By this time it was about noon: the sun was blazing down with almost tropical heat. We had been awake the greater part of the night, and had done a hard morning's work, and felt a decided need for refreshment. In a few minutes we had lighted a little fire, put the kettle on to boil, and set the moose kidneys, impaled on sharp sticks, to roast by the fire; and with fresh kidneys, good strong tea, plenty of sugar and salt, and some hard biscuit, I made one of the most sumptuous breakfasts it has been my lot to assist at.

Breakfast over, I told the Indian to go down to camp and bring up the other men to assist in cutting up and smoking the meat. As soon as he had departed I laid myself out for a rest. I shifted my bed—that is to say, my heap of dried bracken and pine tops—under the shadow of a pine, spread my blanket out, and lay down to smoke a pipe of peace

in the most contented frame of mind that a man can ever hope to enjoy in this uneasy and troublesome world. I had suffered from cold and from hunger—I was now warm and well fed. I was tired after a hard day's work and long night's vigil, and was thoroughly capable of enjoying that greatest of all luxuries—sweet repose after severe exercise. The day was so warm that the shade of the trees fell cool and grateful, and I lay flat on my back, smoking my pipe, and gazing up through the branches into a perfectly clear, blue sky, with occasionally a little white cloud like a bit of swansdown floating across it, and felt, as I had often felt before, that no luxury of civilisation can at all compare with the comfort a man can obtain in the wilderness. I lay smoking till I dropped off to sleep, and slept soundly until the men coming up from camp awoke me.

Such is a pretty fair sample of a good day's sport. It was not a very exciting day, and I have alluded to it chiefly because the incidents are fresh in my mind. The great interest of moose-calling comes in when a bull answers early in the evening, and will not come up boldly, and you and the bull spend the whole night trying to outwit each other. Sometimes, just when you think you have succeeded in deceiving him, a

little air of wind will spring up; he will get scent of you, and be off in a second. Sometimes a bull will answer at intervals for several hours, will come up to the edge of the open ground, and there stop and cease speaking. You wait, anxiously watching for him all night, and in the morning, when you examine the ground, you find that something had scared him, and that he had silently made off, so silently that his departure was unnoticed. It is marvellous how so great and heavy a creature can move through the woods without making the smallest sound; but he can do so, and does, to the great confusion of the hunter.

Sometimes another bull appears upon the scene, and a frightful battle ensues; or a cow will commence calling and rob you of your prey; or you may get an answer or two in the evening, and then hear nothing for several hours, and go to sleep and awake in the morning to find that the bull had walked calmly up within ten yards of you. Very frequently you may leave camp on a perfectly clear, fine afternoon, when suddenly a change will come on, and you may have to pass a long dreary night on some bare and naked spot of ground, exposed to the pitiless pelting of the

storm. One such night I well remember last fall. It rained, and thundered, and blew the whole time from about eight o'clock, until daylight at last gave us a chance of dragging our chilled and benumbed bodies back to camp. Fortunately such exposure, though unpleasant, never does one any harm in the wilderness.

Occasionally a moose will answer, but nothing will induce him to come up, and in the morning, if there is a little wind, you can resort to the only other legitimate way of hunting the moose, namely, "creeping," or "still hunting," as it would be termed in the States, which is as nearly as possible equivalent to ordinary deerstalking.

After the rutting season the moose begin to "yard," as it is termed. I have seen pictures of a moose-yard in which numbers of animals are represented inside and surrounded by a barrier of snow, on the outside of which baffled packs of wolves are clamorously howling; and I have seen a moose-yard so described in print as to make it appear that a number of moose herd together and keep tramping and tramping in the snow to such an extent that by mid-winter they find themselves in what is literally a yard—a hollow bare place, surrounded by deep snow. Of course

such a definition is utterly absurd. A moose does not travel straight on when he is in search of food, but selects a particular locality, and remains there as long as the supply of provisions holds out; and that place is called a yard.

Sometimes a solitary moose "yards" alone, sometimes two or three together, occasionally as many as half a dozen may be found congregated in one place. When a man says he has found a "moose-yard," he means that he has come across a place where it is evident from the tracks crossing and recrossing and intersecting each other in all directions, and from the signs of browsing on the trees, that one or more moose have settled down to feed for the winter. Having once selected a place or "yard," the moose will remain there till the following summer if the food holds out, and they are not disturbed by man. If forced to leave their "yard," they will travel a long distance—twenty or thirty miles—before choosing another feeding-ground. After the rutting season moose wander about in an uneasy state of mind for three weeks or so, and are not all settled down till the beginning of November.

In "creeping," therefore, or stalking moose, the first thing to be done is to find a moose-yard.

You set out early in the morning, in any direction you may think advisable, according to the way the wind blows, examining carefully all the tracks that you come across. When you hit upon a track, you follow it a little way, examining it and the ground and trees, to see if the animal is travelling or not. If you find that the moose has "yarded," that is to say, fed, and you can come across evidences of his presence not more than a couple of days or so old, you make up your mind to hunt that particular moose.

The utmost caution and skill are necessary. The moose invariably travels down wind some little distance before beginning to feed, and then works his way up, browsing about at will in various directions. He also makes a circle down wind before lying down, so that, if you hit on a fresh track and then follow it, you are perfectly certain to start the animal without seeing him. You may follow a moose track a whole day, as I have done before now, and finally come across the place where you started him, and then discover that you had passed within fifty yards of that spot early in the morning, the animal having made a large circuit and lain down close to his tracks. The principle, therefore, that the hunter has to go upon is, to

keep making small semicircles down wind so as to constantly cut the tracks and yet keep the animal always to windward of him. Having come across a track and made up your mind whether it is pretty fresh, whether the beast is a large one worth following, and whether it is settled down and feeding quietly, you will not follow the track, but go down wind and then gradually work up wind again till you cut the tracks a second time. Then you must make out whether the tracks are fresher or older than the former, whether they are tracks of the same moose or those of another, and leave them again and work up, and cut them a third time; and so you go on gradually, always trimming down wind and edging up wind again, until, finally, you have quartered the whole ground.

Perhaps the moose is feeding upon a hardwood ridge of beech and maples of, say, two or three miles in length and a quarter of a mile in width. Every square yard you must make good in the way I have endeavoured to describe, before you proceed to go up to the moose. At length, by dint of great perseverance and caution, you will have so far covered the ground that you will know the animal must be in some particular spot. Then

comes the difficult moment. I may say at once that it is mere waste of time trying to creep except on a windy day, even with moccasins on; and it is of no use at any time trying to creep a moose unless you are provided with soft leather moccasins. No human being can get within shot of a moose on a still day: the best time is when windy weather succeeds a heavy fall of rain. Then the ground is soft, the little twigs strewed about bend instead of breaking, and the noise of the wind in the trees deadens the sound of your footsteps. If the ground is dry, and there is not much wind, it is impossible to get near the game. When you have determined that the moose is somewhere handy—when you come across perfectly fresh indications of his presence—you proceed inch by inch; you must not make the smallest noise; the least crack of a dead branch or of a stick under foot will start the animal. Especially careful must you be that nothing taps against your gun-stock, or that you do not strike the barrel against a tree, for, naturally, any such unusual sound is far worse than the cracking of a stick. If, however, you succeed in imitating the noiseless movements and footsteps of your Indian, you will probably be rewarded by seeing him presently

make a "point" like a pointer dog. Every quivering fibre in his body proves his excitement. He will point out something dark to you among the trees. That dark mass is a moose, and you must fire at it without being too careful what part of the animal you are going to hit, for probably the moose has heard you and is only waiting a second before making up his mind to be off.

Generally speaking, the second man sees the moose first. The leader is too much occupied in looking at the tracks—in seeing where he is going to put his foot down. The second man has only to tread carefully in the footsteps of the man preceding him, and is able to concentrate his attention more on looking about. The moment you spy or hear the animal you should imitate the call of a moose—first to attract the attention of the animal, which, if it has not smelt you, will probably stop a second to make sure what it is that has frightened him; secondly, to let the Indian in front know that the game is on foot. Moose-creeping is an exceedingly difficult and exciting pastime. It requires all a man's patience, for, of course, you may travel day after day in this way without finding any traces of deer. To the novice it is not interesting, for, apparently, the

Indian wanders aimlessly about the woods without any particular object. When you come to understand the motive for every twist and turn he makes, and appreciate the science he is displaying, it becomes one of the most fascinating pursuits in which the sportsman can indulge.

Sometimes one may be in good luck and come across a moose in some glade or "interval," the result of the labours of former generations of beavers. An "interval" is the local term for natural meadows, which are frequently found along the margins of streams. Beavers have done great and useful work in all these countries. The evidences of their labours have far outlived the work of aboriginal man. They dam up little streams and form shallow lakes and ponds. Trees fall in and decay; the ponds get choked with vegetation, fill up, and are turned into natural meadows of great value to the settler. Beavers have played an important part in rendering these savage countries fit for the habitation of civilised man.

The moose may also be run down in winter time on snow-shoes. This may be called partly a legitimate, and partly an illegitimate, mode of killing the animal. If the snow is not very deep,

the moose can travel, and to come up with him requires immense endurance on the part of a man, but no skill except that involved in the art of running on snow-shoes. You simply start the animal and follow after him for a day, or sometimes two or three days, when you come up with him and walk as close as you like and shoot him.

If the snow lies very deep in early spring, moose may be slaughtered with ease. The sun thaws the surface, which freezes up again at night and forms an icy crust strong enough to support a man on snow-shoes, or a dog, but not nearly strong enough to support a moose. Then they can be run down without trouble. You find your moose and start a dog after him. The unfortunate moose flounders helplessly in the snow, cutting his legs to pieces, and in a very short time becomes exhausted, and you can walk up to him, knock him on the head with an axe, or stick him with a knife, as you think best. Hundreds and hundreds of moose have been slaughtered in this scandalous manner for their hides alone. The settlers also dig pits for them and snare them, both of which practices, I need hardly say, are most nefarious. There is nothing sportsmanlike about them, and they involve waste of good meat, because, unless a man looks to the

snare every day (which these men never do), he runs the chance of catching a moose and finding the carcass unfit for food when he revisits the place. I shall not describe the method of snaring a moose, for fear some of you gentlemen might be tempted to practise it, or lest it might be supposed for a moment that I had ever done such a wicked thing myself.

Many men prefer caribou-hunting to moose-hunting, and I am not sure that they are not right. The American caribou is, I believe, identical with the reindeer of Europe, though the American animal grows to a much larger size and the males carry far finer horns. The does have small horns also. I believe the caribou is the only species of deer marked by that peculiarity. Caribou are very fond of getting out on the lakes as soon as the ice will bear, and feeding round the shores. They feed entirely on moss and lichens, principally on the long grey moss, locally known as "old men's beards," which hangs in graceful festoons from the branches of the pines, and on the beautiful purple and cream-coloured caribou-moss that covers the barrens. They are not very shy animals, and will venture close to lumber camps to feed on the moss which grows most luxuriantly on the tops of the

pines which the axe-men have felled. Caribou cannot be run down, and the settlers rarely go after them. They must be stalked on the barrens and lakes, or crept up to in the woods, precisely in the same manner as the moose.

Such is a brief outline of some Canadian sports. Life in the woods need not be devoted entirely to hunting, but can be varied to a great extent by fishing and trapping. The streams and lakes teem with trout, and the finest salmon-fishing in the world is to be found in New Brunswick and on the north shore of the gulf. In Lower Canada there is still a good deal of fur to be found. In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia beavers are almost extinct, and marten, mink, lynx, otter, and other valuable fur-bearing animals are comparatively scarce. It would be hard, I think, for a man to spend a holiday more pleasantly and beneficially than in the Canadian woods. Hunting leads him into beautiful scenery; his method of life induces a due contemplation of nature, and tends to wholesome thought. He has not much opportunity for improving his mind with literature, but he can read out of the great book of Nature and find "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." If he has his eyes and ears open,

he cannot fail to take notice of many interesting circumstances and phenomena; and if he has any knowledge of natural history, every moment of the day must be suggesting something new and interesting to him. A strange scene, for example, which once came within my observation, completely puzzled me at the time, and has done so ever since. I was in Nova Scotia in the fall, when one day my Indian told me that in a lake close by all the rocks were moving out of the water, a circumstance which I thought not a little strange. However, I went to look at the unheard-of spectacle, and sure enough there were the rocks apparently all moving out of the water on to dry land. The lake is of considerable extent, but shallow, and full of great masses of rock. Many of these masses appear to have travelled right out of the lake, and are now high and dry, some fifteen yards above the margin of the water. They have ploughed deep and regularly defined channels for themselves. You may see them of all sizes, from blocks of, say, roughly speaking, six or eight feet in diameter, down to stones which a man could lift. Moreover, you find them in various stages of progress, some a hundred yards or more from shore and apparently just beginning to move; others half-way to their

destination, and others again, as I have said, high and dry above the water. In all cases there is a distinct groove or furrow which the rock has clearly ploughed for itself. I noticed one particularly good specimen, an enormous block which lay some yards above high-water mark. The earth and stones were heaped up in front of it to a height of three or four feet. There was a deep furrow, the exact breadth of the block, leading down directly from it into the lake, and extending till it was hidden from my sight by the depth of the water. Loose stones and pebbles were piled up on each side of this groove in a regular clearly defined line. I thought at first that from some cause or other the smaller stones, pebbles, and sand had been dragged down from *above*, and consequently had piled themselves up in *front* of all the large rocks too heavy to be moved, and had left a vacant space or furrow behind the rocks. But if that had been the case, the drift of moving material would of course have joined together again in the space of a few yards behind the fixed rocks. On the contrary, these grooves or furrows remained the same width throughout their entire length, and have, I think, undoubtedly been caused by the rock forcing its way up through the loose shingle and stones which

compose the bed of the lake. What power has set these rocks in motion it is difficult to decide. The action of ice is the only thing that might explain it; but how ice could exert itself in that special manner, and why, if ice is the cause of it, it does not manifest that tendency in every lake in every part of the world, I do not pretend to comprehend.

My attention having been once directed to this, I noticed it in various other lakes. Unfortunately my Indian only mentioned it to me a day or two before I left the woods. I had not time, therefore, to make any accurate investigation into the subject. I have mentioned this extraordinary phenomenon to geologists and other scientific men, but have never been given any satisfactory explanation of it. In fact, the usual explanation was an assurance in polite language that I was a liar. Scientists hate to be puzzled.

Even from the point of view of a traveller who cares not for field sports, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and in fact all Canada, is a country full of interest. It is interesting for many reasons which I need not trouble you with, but especially so as showing the development of what in future will be a great nation. For whether in connection with this country, or as independent, or as joined

to the United States, or any portion of them, that vast region which is now called British North America will assuredly some day support the strongest, most powerful, and most masterful population on the continent of America.

SHEEP-HUNTING IN THE MOUNTAINS

OVIS MONTANA, locally and variously called the mountain sheep, Big-horn, or Taye, is very closely allied to, if he is not identical with, *Ovis argali*, the wild sheep of Asia, and he is akin to the European Mouflon. He stands about as high as a black-tail deer, but is much thicker and more massively made in the body and limbs than the latter animal. His head resembles that of a domestic sheep, but it is larger and more powerful-looking, and, in the case of the male, it is surmounted by a huge pair of curving horns far longer than those that adorn the head of any civilised ram. Among these animals this ornament is not confined to the male sex, for the females also carry small horns. The hair is coarse, very thick and close, resembling that of the deer in texture, but bluer in colour over the greater portion of his body, with a peculiar exception which makes him look as if he was in the habit of sitting down in the snow, and some stuck

to him. He is a grand and noble-looking animal, viewed standing motionless on some jutting crag, or bounding with gigantic springs down a precipice that apparently could not afford a foothold to any living thing.

Some years ago I doubted the existence of the mountain sheep. I classed him with the Gorgons, dragons, and unicorns. I had read about him in books, but in all my wanderings I had never seen one, not even a stuffed specimen except in the British Museum, and I had some doubts as to whether they were genuine, or had been got up after the manner of Barnum's mermaid; neither had I come across any reliable man who had killed one. My doubts were, however, at length dispelled. One day, while hunting on the plains, the government scout of a neighbouring post told me he was certain that there were big-horns on a certain range of bluffs in Wyoming. I did not believe him in the least, but as a large party of us, including some soldiers, were going through from a post on the railway to one of the forts situated in that territory, and as we should have to pass through the bluffs, we determined to spend a few days there and to prospect for sheep. This same government scout was a considerable villain, and

got us into a nice mess. I don't know why it was, but the inhabitants of the "city" in the neighbourhood of the fort from which we had been hunting took it into their wise heads that neither my friend P. nor myself were likely ever to revisit that region, and that therefore it was expedient to pillage, squeeze, and skin us completely before we got away. They had laid their plans pretty well. The scout arranged with a worthy citizen from whom we had hired some horses that at the last moment he should put in a most exorbitant claim for damage done to his horses. Accordingly, after the ambulance that had conveyed us to the station had returned to the fort, and while we were waiting quietly at the hotel for the train, it being then about eleven o'clock at night, we were politely but firmly requested to pay a sum for damage done to the team, greatly exceeding the whole value of both horses and wagon put together, and, at the same moment, an attachment was placed upon our luggage. We were in a nice fix. We had to leave by that night's train, for there was but one train a day, and the party we were to join were impatiently waiting for us at S——, a station some distance down the line, and expected to leave the next day, the moment the

train got in. Fortunately the cars were three or four hours late, which gave us time to do something. We got a buggy, drove off to the residence of an attorney, who was recommended to us by the hotel proprietor for his strict honesty, woke him up, turned him out of bed, narrated the circumstances, lugged him down to the station, paid the money into court, got the attachment off our luggage, and started triumphantly by the train. I never found out what became of our case, but I need scarcely say we never saw any of our money again. Where it went to I do not know; probably it went, in the words of the late Mr. James Fisk, "where the woodbine twineth"; at any rate I am pretty sure that a very small proportion of it, if any, found its way into the pockets of the two conspirators—the scout and the owner of the horses.

On arriving at the little town of S—— we found the party were not ready, and we were compelled to wait there some days, a period of inactivity which proved fatal to our scout. S—— was at that time inhabited by a great many card-sharpers and gentlemen of that and kindred persuasions, and a few railway employés. The small military post is situated some little distance

outside the town. The day after our arrival a carpenter who had just completed a building contract somewhere, and who was overflowing with money and good-nature, came back to the town and proceeded to "treat," with the result that in a few hours the city was mad drunk, and remained so for a considerable time. P—— and I dined that night at the barracks, and by the time we returned to the town the orgy was at its height. The men were simply wild, raving drunk, drunk with the vilest of whisky, and nobody knows how vile and how horrible in its consequences whisky can be until he has tasted a sample of the kind of stuff that is, or used to be, concocted at many of those little out-of-the-way frontier towns. They were yelling, laughing, roaring, fighting, exploding rifles and firing off revolvers promiscuously all over the place. They intended it as a *feu de joie* no doubt, but as they loaded with ball cartridge, and were too magnanimous to take the petty precaution of firing in the air, it did not strike P—— and me exactly in that light. In fact it appeared anything but a joyful proceeding to us, and considering that discretion, in such a case, was undoubtedly the better part of valour, we made a wide circle out of the line of

fire until we gained the shelter of a long line of trucks, and under their friendly cover crept up to the hotel at the railway station, like a couple of malefactors escaping from a hot pursuit. Malefactors in fact we soon found ourselves to be, for when we reached the hotel we discovered all our baggage piled up in a heap in the centre of the room, with the sheriff drunk, and in his shirt-sleeves, seated on it, attended by a judge and the sub-sheriff, both also the better—or worse—for whisky. It was fortunate that we arrived when we did. The sheriff or sub-sheriff, I forget which, had assaulted my servant in the most cowardly, brutal manner. The man had refused, and very properly refused, to separate my property from a lot of baggage belonging to other people, and the drunken representative of the law drew two pistols upon him, knocked him down, kicked him, threatened to blow his bad-worded brains out, and likely enough would have done so but for the man's wonderful command of himself and quiet courage.

After some little difficulty we found out what was the matter. It appeared that our government scout, under the influence of bad whisky, had taken it into his head to try the attachment dodge over

again. Accordingly, during our absence at the barracks, he trumped up a most ridiculous charge, claiming five dollars a day wages from us during the whole time he was out on an expedition from Fort ——, which we had accompanied. He was receiving government pay, was detailed for duty with the expedition in his capacity of government scout, and was allowed by the officer in command to go out hunting with us as a matter of courtesy and kindness to us, and because he knew the country better than anyone else. The man was anxious to go, and was very pleased and perfectly satisfied with the liberal present we made him at the termination of the hunt. The charge was too preposterous to be sustained, but there was no use in representing the injustice and absurd nature of it, as the civil authorities and legal functionaries in the town were in the swim, and, if they had not been, were too drunk to listen to reason. At first the captors of our baggage were very offensive, and things looked somewhat ugly; but a remark of P—— quite altered the aspect of affairs. He asked the sheriff, with a plaintive air of humble submission, whether he would not allow us the use of one small article of baggage, namely, a five-gallon keg of whisky. This request seemed somehow to tickle the fancies

of the officials, for they allowed us to take possession of the keg, and becoming more civil and communicative, told us that either we must pay the money claimed, or lose our baggage, or get two well-to-do respectable citizens to go security for the amount. The hotel proprietor and other gentlemen were kind enough to do this for us, and the sheriffs then condescended to give over our baggage and vacate our rooms. The shouting and the riot went on all night, and I am bound to say that I was not very sorry to leave S——. The impression it made upon me was that it was not a nice place for a quiet inoffensive man to live in, especially if he had any property of any kind. Of course we then and there discharged our scout. He applied to the officer commanding at S—— to pay his expenses back to Fort ——, which that officer politely declined to do, and our friend had to make his way back as best he could. He lost his place, and that was the last I heard of him. We subsequently heard that the sheriff also came to an untimely end. It seems he had a little unpleasantness with some gentleman of the town, and, happening one night to see his friend through a window seated with his back towards him, and thinking that the opportunity of settling the difference between them was too good to be

lost, he fired at the man, shot him through the back, and killed him. In consequence of this the sheriff lost his appointment, and, if report be true, what he probably thought of still greater importance, his life. The whole town also was thoroughly purged. Detectives were sent down, the card-sharpers were hunted out of the place, the ring of villains who administered so-called law and justice was broken up, and I believe S—— has ever since been as peaceable a place as a man need wish to see anywhere. So possibly our experience, which was decidedly disagreeable to us personally, resulted to the general welfare of the commnuity at S——. After this episode we met with no further delays, and the next morning we started on our way to Fort ——.

A very pleasant time we had, skirting the base of the hills, following the old emigrant track to Utah. The month was December, the weather fine and open, and game—that is, deer and antelope —abundant, with an occasional buffalo for a change. One day I went out alone on foot to look for a deer. I had not gone very far walking along a ridge, keeping a sharp look-out on either side, before I espied a long way off a party of five or six deer. Taking care to keep myself concealed, I got up within good

view and took a spy at them with my field-glasses, to see if there was a good head among the gang. There they were—one, two, three, four, five deer, feeding quietly, but I could not make out any antlers among them. Curious-looking deer, too, I thought to myself, and screwed the glasses in a little, and steadied myself for a better look. Well, I thought, there is certainly an unusual appearance about them, something odd in the colour, something strange in the shape. Of a sudden a thought that felt red-hot rushed through me—what if they should be sheep! "By Jove! they are sheep," I exclaimed, as one moved a little into a better light—"two big rams, just look at their horns," and three small ones. I declare I felt as excited as if I had discovered a new animal or attained the North Pole. I was so nervous I could not do anything for a few minutes, but after a while set to work in fear and trembling to execute a scientific stalk. If those sheep had been the last specimens of their race remaining on earth, I could not have been more anxious to get a fair shot at them. It was a difficult country, and I had a hard climb and an anxious time of it, but at last I got into a position that I felt sure would enable me to creep up within range. Alas! I was doomed to awful disappoint-

ment that day. Two others of the party were out shooting at coyotes, birds, anything they came across; and when after infinite trouble I had crawled up within shooting distance of the sheep, and was pulling myself together and settling myself for the fatal moment, they fired a shot, started the game, and snatched the victory from out of my very grasp, and I had all my labour to begin over again. To make a long story short, I made three stalks on those sheep, for they were unaccustomed to the sound of firearms, and did not run far, and three times the same thing happened, and I was baulked by the same unlucky cause. On the third occasion, however, the sheep were seriously scared, and ran so far that, as it was getting late, I was obliged to leave them, and with a very heavy heart set a gloomy face towards home. On my way over a high ridge I noticed something curious away out on the plains near a bend of the Platte, and with the glasses made out a lot of tents or Indian tepees, I could not determine which. We had a consultation about it in camp that evening, and decided that, as there were no Indians in the neighbourhood, what I saw must have been the tents of a company of soldiers we expected to meet us from the fort.

The next morning my hunting companion, my

Scotch gillie Sandie, and I, started off to take up the trail of the sheep. We galloped along till opposite the place where I had last seen them, picketed our horses, and commenced climbing the hills. We had not gone twenty yards when we saw something moving in the far distance. Out with the glasses! Perhaps it is one of the sheep, I thought. "Hallo!" I cried, amid general consternation, "it is a man." Another good look. "No, it is a woman." "No, a man in a blanket. An Indian!" Without another word, down we went flat as serpents in the long grass, crawled back to our horses, and then helter-skelter back to camp as hard as we could go. We found camp in a bustle, men with their carbines in their hands saddling up, tents being taken down, and a lot of ugly-looking savages sitting about three or four hundred yards off on a rock, with their blankets drawn up to their noses, looking on, while several more noble redskins were hovering about in the distance. It did not look pleasant. More and more Indians kept arriving, some with the carcasses of deer on their saddles—the villains! what right had they to come marauding on our hunting grounds?—and after a while a lot of them, getting bold, came into camp, making friendly signs,

shook hands, and sat down and smoked with us. There was one old fellow who spoke a few words of English and acted as interpreter; he was evidently the comic man of the party, and quite a character in his way. He was a queer, wizened, dried-up looking specimen of humanity, clothed in multitudinous rags of ancient flannel shirt, tattered blanket, and dilapidated deerskin leggings. He rode a pony as ancient, as lean, and as ragged as himself, and he had a lot of old rusty beaver-traps, and pots, and pans, and kettles, and in fact apparently all his household goods distributed over the persons of himself and his steed, and rattling, clanging, and jingling whenever he moved. He made frequent remarks in Indian—jokes, I presume, or remarks on our personal appearance, for they were received with shouts of laughter—and he was equally voluble in English, though his knowledge of that language was apparently limited, for he kept on informing us that "heap of Sioux coming, heap wagon, white men with them." They all professed great friendship, but they were so very saucy and bumptious, and tried so pertinaciously to steal everything that they could lay their hands on, that we concluded to clear out as speedily as possible, and accordingly we struck

tents, bundled everything into the wagons, and left with, as far as I am concerned, no amiable feelings towards the "cut off" band of Sioux. I am generally rather partial to Indians, but I confess on this occasion I felt fully prepared to endorse the opinion of the gentleman who said that "all Indians were pison." In the first place this same "cut off" band of Sioux had only a short time before massacred between eighty and ninety Pawnee women and children. They came upon the camp while all the men were out running buffalo, surrounded it, and killed every human being in the place. It may be said that it was "their nature so to do," the Pawnees and the Sioux being hereditary foes, but at any rate I defy anyone to show that they had the slightest right to come rampaging about the bluffs, turning us out of camp, spoiling our hunting, and destroying our chance of getting a sheep.

Late in the evening after dark we arrived at a little solitary cattle-ranch tended by one man. He was standing at the door when we rode up, looking very uneasy and peering through the darkness, but he brightened up considerably when he saw we were white men. He was very hospitable. "Walk in, boys," he said, "walk right in

and sit down. We ain't much 'heeled'[1] for chairs, I guess, but you must make yourselves as comfortable as you can." And so we sat down and had a long talk with him about cattle and hunting and Indians, and the lonely dangerous life he led, and various other congenial topics of a similar nature. We camped that night close to the ranch, and on the following morning made another excursion into the hills in the hope of crossing the tracks of the sheep; but finding that we were in the position of little Bo-peep, and that like her we had lost our sheep and could not tell where to find them, and not having sufficient leisure to adopt the policy of masterly inactivity recommended to that young lady—a policy which, moreover, we were forced to recognise would have proved unavailing in our case, since we were anxious only about the heads and horns of the animals, and the position of their tails was a matter of indifference to us in the event of their coming home—and perceiving that the Indians had run through the whole district and had scared the game out of it, we very reluctantly abandoned the

[1] To be "heeled" signifies in Western phraseology to be prepared for, or provided with, anything. The term is borrowed from the cockpit; a bird is said to be heeled when his spurs are put on and he is ready for the fight.

sheep, and struck out in a straight line for our destination.

We had to travel through an ugly monotonous country consisting of flat dried-up plains broken by occasional lines of clay bluffs. Herbage was scarce, fuel still scarcer, and as we had no time for hunting even if the country had been favourable for the chase, we thought it best to shorten the journey as much as possible. Accordingly when we got within two or three days' march of the fort, four of us determined to make a push for it and try to accomplish the distance, some seventy miles or so, in one day. We travelled fast, "loping" along most of the way, without seeing sign of man or beast until late in the afternoon, when we espied two men galloping towards us. As soon as they caught sight of us they pulled up, then came on a little further, stopped again, turned round, and galloped off a short distance, then stopped again, and finally turned out of the track, pushed their horses a little way up the hill-side, and awaited us. Their manners puzzled us somewhat, but as they were only two, while we were four, we felt exceedingly courageous and cantered merrily on. As soon as we got near they moved down the hill towards us, and we

pulled up to see what they wanted. "Good-evening, boys," said J——; "can you tell us how far it is into the fort, and what on earth were you doing up the hill there?" "Well, I never did," answered one of the men; "darned if we did not take you fellers for Indians. What were we doing up the hill? What in the —— were you doing scooting over the prairie on a dead jump like that for? We made sure you were Indians, did not we, Jim? and we kinder thought we would have a better show up on the high grounds. How far is it to the fort? Well, if you keep up that kind of —— to split gait it won't take you long to git there, I guess; anyhow, you'll be in soon after dark. Been hunting, I expect, haven't you? You did not happen to see any steers down this way as you came along, did you? We lost some of ours a couple of days ago, and can't get track of them anywhere. Did you see no Indians either? No! Well, that's kinder strange too. You had better keep your eyes skinned, there's plenty of 'em around, and they are getting mighty sarcy too. Why, Dr. —— drove out in his buggy a few miles from the fort the other day to meet some gentlemen he was expecting—likely you're the party, I expect—and darned if a bunch of

Indians did not come across him and chased him right back into the fort, and a mighty near thing it was too, I tell you. Well, good-evening. I guess we won't go any further this way, Jim, since they haven't seen any sign of those steers." And so with mutual good-nights we parted, they to pick a nice place to camp for the night, and we to pursue our way to the fort.

It was long after dark when we got in, and, after saying good-night to Lieut. ——, who went off to look up his friends, at length hitched up our tired horses at Dr. ——'s door, and after knocking for admittance in vain walked in and sat down in the parlour to await the arrival of our host. After a few anxious minutes—for we were getting very hungry, not to say thirsty and tired, and had been consoling ourselves during the last few wearisome hours of darkness with anticipations of an hospitable welcome—a step resounded in the wooden passage, the door opened, and a gentleman entered the room, and, after scrutinising us with a somewhat astonished gaze, said, "Well, men, what do you want?" "We were looking for Dr. ——," I timidly answered. "Perhaps you could tell us—" "That's all right," he interrupted; "I am Dr. ——. What's the matter? what do you

want with me?" "Oh!" I said, feeling rather aggrieved at this reception, "I beg your pardon for intruding. We don't want anything. We thought probably you were expecting us. General —— said he would write, and so we thought we would call, and—" "Why, my dear sir, I am most delighted to see you, most happy to make your acquaintance," cried the Doctor, shaking hands violently. "Why did you not say who you were? won't you introduce me to your friends? Expecting you, why of course I have been expecting you this ever so long, began to think you must have been jumped by Indians. By Jove, I came pretty near losing my scalp a couple of days ago. I went out for a drive in the afternoon, thinking I might meet you, and six of those infernal Sioux ran right on top of me and chased me clean up to the fort. If I had not had a pretty good horse, I should have been in a tight place, I can tell you, but there are not many Indian ponies that can get near the mare I was driving. She is a beauty. I must take you out for a drive to-morrow (No, I thank you, thinks I, not any for me. I don't want to be chased round Wyoming in a buggy by a parcel of Sioux Indians). In the meantime you are pretty hungry, I expect. What! come in all

the way from the big bend, did you, you don't say. Well, we will soon settle that all right; supper will be ready in five minutes. In the meantime don't you think just a little—eh? yes, I think so, from a purely medical point of view, I should certainly recommend it," and the Doctor left the room, to reappear in a minute preceded by a pleasant tinkling of spoons and glasses. "How?" said the doctor, and "how" we replied in chorus, replacing our empty goblets on the table, and in a few minutes four hungry individuals were seated round the table, busily engaged in spoiling appetites engendered by a long day's ride.

Some time after I asked the Doctor, who proved to be not only a most hospitable host but also a most charming and agreeable companion, why he appeared so much astonished and in fact disgusted at our first appearance. "Well," he said, "you must not be offended, you know, but really you did look the most horrid set of scoundrels; upon my word you were the very roughest-looking crowd I have seen since I came out west. I thought at first that some one of the cattle-boys had met with some accident, broken his leg or something, but when you all stood up, and there was evidently nothing the matter with any of you,

I was puzzled. I could not make out who you were or what you wanted, anyhow." I could not dispute the accuracy of the Doctor's first estimate of our social status and moral character. Our countenances, scarred by the cutting wind, blistered and peeled by the rays of a bright winter's sun reflected from dazzling snow or the almost equally white surface of alkaline plains, were partially concealed by a three weeks' growth of stubbly beard, and were deeply engrained with the black impalpable powder swept from off the burned prairie by fierce gales. Our hands were grimy, our clothes blood-besmirched and dirty, our moccasins in holes, our headgear misshapen—for constantly sleeping in a felt hat does not improve its appearance or add elegance to its form; we were tired and travel-stained, and I have no doubt we did look a most disreputable gang. After all, it is the clothes that make the man. One reads in books of gifted individuals—superior persons, in whose uncontaminated veins courses the bluest Norman blood—who are supposed to present a dignified and gentlemanlike appearance under all circumstances; but one does not often come across them in real life. The gentility of most men is contained in their shirt collars. The

simple innocence of a narrow band of white undefiled linen invests the whole figure with an air that nothing else can impart. Remove it, supply its place with a ragged woollen muffler or kerchief of ancient date, and the effect is marvellous and sad. If you want to destroy an aristocracy, cut off their collars, not their heads. Of course there are some men who bear the change better than others. So there are some individuals among all those classes that lead rough, wild, out-of-door lives, such as hunters, trappers, miners, cattle men, lumber men, &c., who look more refined and neater than their fellows, and these men, being to the manner born, will look a great deal more like gentlemen than almost any gentleman who has taken to the wild life for a while. A few weeks in the wilderness will transform most high-bred looking men, and give them the appearance of atrocious villains of the deepest dye. You need not smile, you fellows, I really have not any personal feeling in this matter. It is true that my appearance and probable circumstances in life have been the subject of varied criticism and frequent remarks. I have had many trades, occupations, and missions in life attributed to me, all very wide of the mark, but none of them incom-

patible with a decent and honourable existence. Under these circumstances I have no ground of complaint, seeing that I have but little faith in the novelist's theory of the indestructibility of a gentlemanlike appearance, but believe greatly in the saving qualities of a shirt collar; and hold that without that mystic ring, if you take a lot of men from different classes, mix them up, dress them in the same rough clothes, and see that they are all equally unkempt, unshaven, and unclean, you will find it very hard to separate them correctly again.

For the next three days we were busily engaged, in "paying visits" during the first two, and in recuperating our shattered constitutions on the third. Then Christmas was close at hand, and we concluded to celebrate that festival in the fort, so that it was not until ten days or a fortnight after our arrival that we sallied out on a hunting expedition into the Black Hills. Game proved tolerably abundant, but the weather was awfully cold, too cold for pleasure. If I may here be allowed to offer one word of advice to hunters, I would say, Don't go out on the plains in the northern and middle territories and states in the depth of winter; the game is not worth the

candle. Up to about Christmas you are safe enough ; you will experience spells of cold weather, but nothing to hurt, up to that time ; but after the end of December you may be caught at any moment in a cold snap, lasting several days, when the thermometer will go down very low, and the intense cold be accompanied by violent cruel gales of wind. Such storms are dangerous, and may result in loss of limb or even of life to the traveller whose camp is in an exposed position. Among the hills and in the forest you are right enough at all times, for it is your own fault, or the fault of the men with you, if you cannot make yourself comfortable in any weather where fuel and shelter can be obtained. Nothing worthy of note occurred during this expedition except a little misunderstanding which came near proving inconvenient to one of the party. As one of the officers from the fort and I were returning to camp one evening, making our way through a thick growth of brush and cotton-wood trees that fringed a little stream, we happened to start one of those huge prairie hares commonly called jack-rabbits. We fired at him, as we were close to the camp and there was no danger of scaring better game, and then slid off our horses and

commenced peering and poking about among the bushes to try and get another shot. We had fired two or three more unsuccessful shots, when we broke suddenly into a little open glade, in full view of a small log shanty. We were vastly astonished, for we did not know there was a human habitation within miles and miles of us, and to add to our dismay an excited German sprang up in the open doorway and advanced to us, shouting and gesticulating in the wildest manner. "Mein Gott!" he cried, "I am so glad I did not shoot. Oh, mein Gott, I am so glad. I thought the Indians were on me this time sure: what for you fire into mein house? Three or four bullets come right slam into mein house, I tell you. I was lying down behind a flour-sack, and could see you peeping about in the bush like so many Indian thieves. I got a beautiful sight on that little fellow in the deerskin shirt, and was shoost about to pull when you come out into the open, and I saw you were white men. He'd have gone up anyhow, I tell you. I had a sure thing on him." It was no wonder the poor man was alarmed, for in fact some of our bullets had by bad luck gone right into his shanty through the open door. He had made all his preparations,

had thrown down two sacks of flour across the doorway, and was lying down behind them, with his finger pressing the trigger of a sixteen-shooter repeating rifle when we burst out of the bush and revealed ourselves just in time. The consequences might have been serious, if not they would have been comical, for if he had fired we should have taken him for Indians, and should have got into cover and returned the fire; and our friends, hearing an unusual amount of shooting close to the camp, would have come to our assistance, and a little battle all about nothing would have ensued.

We enjoyed pretty fair sport during this hunt, and got a good many deer and two sheep, but the latter were small young rams, and it was not until I had killed a large specimen some time later that I quite forgave the "cut off" band of Sioux for disturbing us in the bluffs.

Indians are a great nuisance, more especially the Sioux, who roam over the whole breadth of the interior of the continent as far west as the Rocky Mountains, and eastward to the territories of their hereditary enemies, the Chippewas. How these two tribes can ever have fought together much I don't know, for a Sioux is entirely out of his element

off the plains, knows little of canoes, and hates to trust himself in the woods or among the mountains; while the Chippewa is a fish out of water when away from his swamps, rivers, lakes, and woods. They are a fine tribe, the Chippewas, as far as my experience of them goes, and much to be preferred in every way to their roving, marauding, troublesome neighbours on the plains. I think it is Washington Irving who has somewhere (I forget where) unfavourably contrasted the Indian, half-breed, or French *voyageur*, " cowering in his canoe," with the bold adventurous hunters and trappers who career on their high-mettled steeds over the boundless prairie. With all deference to Washington Irving, I do not think he could have had much actual experience in canoes, or he would not have found it necessary to " cower," nor would he have found travelling in a canoe conducive to a mean, melancholy, dispirited frame of mind, as is evidenced by the fact that Canadian Indians and the Hudson Bay Company *voyageurs* and other half-breeds are about the most joyous, light-hearted people on the face of the earth.

I made a very extensive acquaintance among mountain sheep afterwards in Estes Park in Colorado, and on one occasion caught a young one alive.

I left the ranch just before grey dawn to take a solitary stroll round the margin of St. Mary's Lake, and on the slopes and spurs of sheep mountain, and to enjoy that most glorious spectacle, a sunrise among the mountains. I had also some hopes of picking up a sheep or deer. It is hard to imagine anything more beautiful than a summer sunrise in those regions. There is a curious effect in nature just before the break of day that is impossible to describe, but that I think all who have passed many nights under the stars will recognise. There comes a sort of strange uneasy feeling through the atmosphere, a faint tremor as of cold air moves over the earth, as if Nature shivered in her sleep, grew restless, and half awoke.

That sensation will be the first token of a great change at hand. Then the morning star shines out bright and strong, and the other constellations begin to fade. The highest peaks seem to approach one quickly, commence to look nearer, to stand out clearer and whiter than before. A faint, a very faint, light steals over them, a radiance deepening quickly into the beautiful colour of a fresh rose, deepening still, flushing, glowing, and spreading downwards, colouring the snow a most delicate pink, gilding with bright gold the yellow grass,

burnishing and shining like silver on ice and rock. Mists creep up the hillsides, grey in the valleys, pink on the tops, brooding sluggishly in heavy clouds among the lower masses of timber, gauzy, thin, transparent, and hanging in long wisps and shreds from the higher summits of the range. Of a sudden a bare naked crag, piercing the heavens, blazes into dazzling light, like a fiery beacon. Peak after peak answers the signal. The light flows down. The mists float up. Black darkness still reigns in the valleys, the eastern slopes are still wrapped in sleep, but the western hillsides are sparkling with the brightness of a white frost or dewdrops under a dazzling sun, and all the fells and peaks above them are bathed in light. There is nothing so beautiful as beautiful scenery, and it is never seen to better advantage than in the first hour of the dawn.

It is not difficult, after several days' hard work hunting, to spend an idle day or two in such a scene, watching the face of nature ever changing under cloud and sunshine, calm and tempest. The eye never aches at the sight of lovely scenery, nor does the soul sadden. It is the one thing that never palls, with which neither mind nor body is ever weary.

The love of hunting is a passion that leads a man

into scenes of most picturesque beauty. The speckled trout allures him to lake and stream; in pursuit of deer, he wanders through many a secluded valley, amid scenes of soft beauty, which otherwise he might never see. To find the "big-horn" he scales giddy precipices, and climbs to soaring peaks, and confronts nature face to face in her grandest, most terrific moods. He is with nature always, whether on foot, on horseback, or in his birch-bark canoe.

Walking in the midst of such lovely scenery, and watching the day break in such infinite splendour, I must confess that I became somewhat careless as to my hunting, and stumbled right on top of a little band of sheep, feeding on the level ground, before I was aware of their presence. In fact I did not see them until they started. I fired, but without any effect, and set the hound, poor old Plunk, after them.

They had got too good a start, and he could not come near them, but after a while I noticed a little sheep lagging behind. Thinking Plunk might overtake it, I started off best pace after him. It is no joke running over rough ground at an elevation of some 8000 feet on a blazing hot July morning in Colorado, and I puffed and blew

and " larded the lean earth " in the most generous manner.

When I came up I found the sheep perched on a little pinnacle of rock, and the hound baying furiously below. Poor little beast, I pitied it. It was only about three months old, and it looked very forlorn ; it was very slightly wounded also, a fact which I did not know before. I went up to it and patted it, and the poor little creature did not seem much frightened, and did not mind my touching it a bit ; but it would not follow me. It was too much afraid of the dog, I fancy. I did not know what to do. I wanted to keep it alive, for a tame sheep is somewhat of a rarity. I was afraid to leave it alone while I went for a wagon, and I was afraid of leaving the hound to watch it, lest he should run in upon it and kill it during my absence. So I concluded to pack it into the ranch on my back. A nice job I had of it. The little animal was as strong as a donkey, and kicked and walloped about all the time. It was as much as I could do to keep it on my shoulders. By that time the forenoon was far spent, and the sun was pouring down with tropical strength. I don't know which of us was most exhausted by the time we got to the house. However, I was none the

worse, but the poor little sheep never recovered. He drank lots of milk, and seemed all right for the first day, but after that he pined away and died in three or four days.

Running sheep with hounds is a good deal practised in some places. I don't like it. It is a reprehensible habit, and scares all the game out of the country. It is a very sure and easy way of killing sheep if you have a first-rate dog and the ground is suitable to the sport, but unless those two conditions are fulfilled the chance of success is small. Your hound must be very speedy and staunch, and accustomed to the business ; and the sheep must be found near some isolated pinnacle or crags of cliff. You creep up as near as you possibly can to the game, and then start the dog at them, yelling and hallooing, to scare them as much as possible, as soon as you perceive that they have caught sight of the hound. The sheep will run straight up the mountain, and will beat any dog in a short time ; but if the hound has got a good start, and if the ground has been pretty level at first, he will press them so hard that one or perhaps two or three of them will take refuge on the first precipitous cliff or crag they can find. If that happens to be an isolated rock so small that the dog can keep guard round the base of

it, he will keep the sheep at bay—" treed," as they say in Colorado—until his master comes up. But for one successful run you may make many unsuccessful ones. Nothing scares game so much as running them with dogs, and consequently it is a pastime that ought never to be pursued, or at any rate hardly ever, and then only when you can be quite certain of success. The place where I caught the little sheep was very favourable for running them.

The water of St. Mary's Lake is strongly impregnated with alkali, and leaves a deposit of that substance round the edge. The spot is in consequence much frequented by sheep, who, in common with all kinds of deer and cattle, are intensely fond of salt. In former days sheep used to come down nearly every morning to lick the alkali on the little plains surrounding the lake. The ground in the neighbourhood is level, with three or four quite detached rocks jutting out of it, and on one side you can get down pretty close to the plain without showing yourself. I remember one day that same summer we passed the lake, a party of four of us with a string of packhorses, on our way to pitch camp for a few days high up on Long's Peak for the purpose of hunting wapiti on the highest fells. I

was riding behind when I heard Plunk barking furiously, and on galloping up found the cavalcade halted at a little distance, Plunk halfway up one of the masses of detached rock, barking vigorously, and every now and then making plunges towards a fine old patriarchal ram who stood on the top of the rock, and who, with feet placed closed together and head stooped, followed every movement of the dog, presenting his massive horns to him at every point of attack. It was a very pretty sight. In front lay a green grass-covered plain bounded by the little lake, vividly blue and sparkling under a summer breeze and the bright sun that shone on the white alkali that fringed its shores. On the far side of it the mountain rose, covered to the right with a thick growth of green young pine timber, but on the left burned and bare, and terminating in the great crags and cliffs of sheep mountain. In the foreground, piercing the green plain, rose a mass of red sandstone crowned with the massive and stately form of the defiant ram, while the huge dun-coloured hound, bristling with rage, furiously bayed and rushed at him from below. The people at the ranch had roast mutton for dinner that night, and we had mutton chops for tea on Long's Peak. That was the only time I ever killed a sheep with a hound,

and it was a mere accident, for we ran across the sheep by chance. Plunk belonged to Mr. Evans, who at that time owned the ranch-house. He was the best dog for that kind of work I ever saw or heard of, for if he once " treed " a sheep he would hold him there for days. He got into many scrapes, poor beast ; he was so eager, he would follow sheep anywhere, and on one or two occasions got into positions from which he could not have extricated himself without human aid. And in that way he met his fate. He got after a band of sheep one day, and followed them away off out of sight and out of hearing. No distant note of baying came to the anxious ear of his master, who searched all that day for him fruitlessly till nightfall, and all the next day and many days equally in vain. Poor Plunk was never seen or heard of again. He must either have fallen over some cliff, or have jumped down upon some ledge from which he could not descend or ascend again, and there perished slowly and miserably of starvation.

The mountain sheep is a magnificent animal, and the ram carries a splendid head. He is wild-looking and picturesque, and exactly suits the character of the country in which he is found. I know nothing finer in nature than the massive form of a big old

ram standing on some jutting point of a precipitous cliff amidst the grandeur of the mountains which are his home. It requires a good deal of patience and perseverance to hunt the mountain sheep successfully. As a rule they are to be found on the highest peaks and the most inaccessible positions of the range, though in the rutting season, if you are fortunate enough to find a locality inhabited by sheep and undisturbed by man, they will come down and may be met with and killed with comparative ease. To hunt the animal with success, you must have a tolerably accurate idea of his manners and customs. The mountain sheep in Colorado come down to the foothills in the early spring, and return with their lambs about a month or six weeks old in the month of June or July. The old rams stay up on the mountains, and seem to seek the highest crags for shelter, even during the terrible storms of winter. Of course the snow never lies on the more precipitous parts of the mountains, and there is plenty of long grass for them to feed upon, and they appear to prefer the shelter they obtain among the caves and caverns of the rocks to coming down lower on to more snow-encumbered regions, and seeking safety amongst the timber. They are very fond of alkali,

like all other animals, and will run great risks to get a lick of salt every now and then; they will also come down to feed occasionally on little plains and parks at the foot of the mountains.

I have shot many, many sheep at one spot close to the margin of a shallow brackish pond. Finding that they generally came down about eight or nine o'clock in the morning, I used to get there about seven, and sit down and wait patiently for them. I have seen them over and over again descend the mountain, skylarking among themselves, galloping down a few hundred yards and then stopping and looking out carefully all over the country. Finally they would descend to the pond, and, after some hesitation and a great deal of caution, would walk boldly out on the plain, and begin to lick the alkali and browse a little on the grass.

They would stop down sometimes an hour or two if undisturbed, and I have often watched them simply to see what they would do. After a time they would scamper off again, butting each other with their heads in sport, and at last would clamber up the mountain-side and disappear. The great thing in sheep-hunting is to get above them; it is no use whatever trying to stalk a big ram by endeavouring to get up to him from underneath,

because he is certain to see you. The only chance, if you know where he is likely to be, is to climb up above him and work gradually down; then you have a fair likelihood of coming upon him, for he is accustomed to look below for danger.

It is labour lost to follow their tracks. There is a certain great old ram that I know of which nobody has been able to kill yet. I have never seen him, but I know the size of his foot accurately.

I followed him all day once some years ago, and he fooled me beautifully. I started out alone about seven o'clock one winter's morning, and had not ridden more than three or four miles from the house in Estes Park when I struck a very large sheep track plainly visible in the snow. I followed it a little while, till it seemed to be so fresh that I dismounted, tied up my horse, and proceeded on foot. The track was gigantic, and as it led right in the direction of the habitation of this particular old ram, I knew it must be his foot; so I determined to follow him all day if necessary on the chance of a shot. I left my bag and luncheon, took off my coat, and prepared myself for a long and arduous climb.

As bad luck would have it, the sheep was travel-

ling along a very steep mountain side all covered with loose stones, and though I was in moccasins, which are the best wear for hunting, I could not move without making a noise, and I started my sheep. After walking about half an hour I came to the place where he had started, but followed on all the same, in the hope of getting sight of him, and presently came to another spot where he had stood and looked about him. He had no doubt caught sight of me, for he had started off on a dead jump straight down a very steep ravine, at least a thousand feet deep and equally precipitous on the other side. I could make out his tracks going down, but could not see anything of him, although I sat down and carefully examined the opposite face of the mountain with my glasses. So down I went, and presently struck his tracks again going up the other side. It was a terribly hard mountain to climb. It had once been clothed with a thick covering of pine trees which had all been burnt and blown down, and the ground was completely strewn with trunks of trees, smooth and slippery. I do not suppose that my foot touched the ground one-fourth of the distance, for I was obliged to walk along the trees, and hop and jump from one to the other, after the manner of a squirrel. Added to

which inconvenience there was about a foot of snow on the ground, melted by the heat of the sun and frozen by the cold, so that a thick crust had formed, just strong enough to bear your weight about a second, then let you through plump to the ground. It was terrible ground to travel over, and it exhausted me, but I was in hopes it exhausted the sheep also, because the footprints began to be deeply dyed with blood, showing that the sheep was cutting himself with the crust on the snow. I followed and followed my sheep, now and then stopping to use my glass, because the tracks were so fresh that I fancied he ought to be in sight; but I could not get a glimpse of him, and so imagining that he must be further off than I had supposed, I still followed the tracks till I got near the top of a mountain which forms a ridge or offshoot from the gigantic mass of Long's Peak.

Near the top of this ridge was a notch, through which, as I got nearer, I could see that the tracks led. I hurried as much as possible, thinking to myself that he could not be very far off, and that in all probability when I got to the top and looked down through the notch into Willow Park beyond I should see him somewhere below me, and have

a good chance of a shot, or, at any rate, of a stalk.

When I reached the top I found the tracks led down through the notch about twenty or thirty yards, and then stopped; and on looking about me I discovered that my friend, this crafty old ram, had gone down a little way so as to deceive me, had then made a violent leap on one side, gone straight back again through the notch, climbed up to the top of a pile of rocks there, and no doubt had been looking at me and laughing as I toiled laboriously up the hillside after him until I got unpleasantly near, when he had stared off in the direction of the top of Long's Peak. It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and of course I had to give up the chase and scramble down the mountain as best I could. The ground was so dangerous that I was obliged to go very carefully, and it was dark before I got to the bottom of the deep ravine.

I was very tired by this time, having been up before daylight, and working hard all day with nothing to eat; and I was getting awfully cold also, for I had left my coat behind. However, I had to climb up the opposite slope, which I eventually succeeded in doing, and then had to look for my coat, but could not find it anywhere. Then I

searched for my luncheon bag, but could not find that either.

It was pitch dark by this time, so I gave up the search for them, and began to look for my horse, but could not find him.

It sounds very easy to remember where you left your horse, and to find him, but it is not such a simple matter when it is pitch dark, when there is nothing particular to mark the spot, and when you have the whole of Colorado to look in. I did not know what to do. I could have walked back in two or three hours' time, and would have done so, but I was afraid to leave my horse out all night, lest he should freeze to death. He was not hitched up by the bridle merely, but securely fastened with a strong new lariat, which he could not possibly have broken, so I kept hunting about until eventually I found the poor beast. How glad he was to see me! No doubt he had made up his mind to be deserted.

It was a difficult job to get home, for I had to lead the horse a long way down the hillside, over ground thickly strewn with fallen trees, and the night was pitch dark. I blundered and stumbled, and I swore, and he swore, if a horse can swear, and stumbled and blundered; and we had a very

bad time of it altogether till we got on more level ground, and I was able to get on his back and make rapid progress. We reached the shanty, pretty tired, about eleven o'clock at night. That old ram had fooled me completely, and I have never since had a chance of paying him out for it.

NEWFOUNDLAND IN THE 'SEVENTIES

ONE fine August day a friend of mine and I, being anxious to explore the hunting-grounds of Newfoundland, embarked on board an Allan steamship, and after a somewhat boisterous passage found ourselves deposited in the city of St. John's.

St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland, is remarkably well situated on the northern side of a magnificent harbour. The entrance to the harbour is through a very narrow passage between lofty, precipitous, rugged cliffs; but within, the haven expands and forms a perfectly secure, land-locked, and commodious shelter from the wild waves that lash those inhospitable shores. The most noticeable point about the city is that all the manufacturing energy of the population appears to be concentrated in the making of long fisherman's boots, and the keeping of public-houses. It produces seal oil and cod-fish, and consumes rum and tobacco. St. John's is a busy, thriving, money-making place, and

the prosperity of the capital of the oldest colony of Great Britain is appreciated by the traveller long before he sets foot upon her classic shores ; for one side of the harbour smells abominably of dried cod-fish, and the other of seal oil. Judging by the accent, there must be a large mixture of Irish blood in the population, a conjecture which is not confuted by the fact that the inhabitants of St. John's and of the outports—as all the other towns and settlements are called—and of the island in general, are a splendid set of tall, strong, active, healthy-looking men. Accustomed from childhood to brave the hardships of a most rigorous climate, drawing their sustenance from the teeming but treacherous bosom of a storm-vexed ocean, that rages in vain for ever round a rugged reef-bound coast ; navigating their frail and ill-found schooners amid tempest, ice, and fog, the Newfoundlanders have developed into one of the finest seafaring populations on the face of the globe. Nowhere can better mariners be found than among the hardy, adventurous, self-reliant men who ply their precarious calling along the dangerous shores of their native island, or on the wintry coast of the neighbouring mainland of Labrador.

The principal industry of Newfoundland is the

cod-fishery, and the chief centre of the trade is at St. John's, where the process of packing and shipping the salted fish may be witnessed to perfection. The fish, having been dried on stages erected for the purpose on the shores of every bay and inlet of the island, are brought to St. John's in small schooners and thrown in heaps upon the wharves of the merchants. There they are culled over, sorted into three or four piles according to their quality by experienced cullers, who separate the good from the indifferent, and the indifferent from the bad, with great rapidity and unerring skill. Women with hand-barrows attend upon the cullers, carry the fish into an adjoining shed, and upset their loads beside barrels standing ready to receive them. A couple of boys throw the fish into a cask, piling them up a foot or so above the brim, mount on the top, and having danced a war-dance upon them in their hob-nailed boots to pack them down, roll the barrel under a screw-press, where two men stand ready to take charge of it. Grasping the ends of the long arms of the lever, the men run quickly round a couple of times, lift their feet off the ground, and, throwing their weight on the lever to add impetus to the blow, swing round with it,

and bring down the stamp with a dull thud, compressing the cod-fish into a compact mass. The cask is then rolled out from under the press, and handed over to two coopers. In a trice the hoops are driven on, the cask is headed up, and then trundled down an incline into the hold of some vessel loading for the West Indies or some Mediterranean port. The rapidity with which the whole process is managed is remarkable.

Sealing operations also are vigorously conducted by the inhabitants of St. John's. In former days the seal fishery was carried on in sailing vessels, and was attended with considerable danger; but now that steamships are used the risk is much diminished. The paying nature of the business may be gathered from the fact that steamers of five or six hundred tons burden, built and fitted for the purpose, and quite useless for any other trade, make a large profit in average years, although the sealing season lasts only a month or six weeks. Early in the spring, about the beginning of March, the ice from the north strikes in towards the eastern coast of Newfoundland, bringing with it hundreds and hundreds of thousands of seals, young and old. Then St. John's wakes up, and the whole island is in a bustle. Though it entails constant

exposure to great cold, and extremely hard work, the young men struggle eagerly to secure a berth for the sealing season, for they earn very high wages, and the business is salted with that element of uncertainty and danger which adds such a relish to life. At length everything is ready, and a fleet of steamers from St. John's, and of sailing craft, of all kinds and sizes from large coasting schooners down to open boats, issuing from every bay, start out to look for the ice. The ships, crowded with as many men as they can hold, make two trips of about a fortnight's duration each; the first being devoted to the capture of the young seals, at that time only a few weeks old, and the second to the destruction of the full-grown animals. The latter are generally shot, while the former are knocked on the head with clubs. As soon as the ice is reached, the men scatter themselves about the field, running over the rough surface, jumping from block to block of loose ice, tumbling into holes and scrambling out again, wild with excitement in their search for seals. Each man acts independently, doing the best he can for himself. When he has killed a seal he stops but a minute to whip off the skin with the blubber attached, and fasten a cord to it, and then off again after another seal, till he has got

as many as he can drag, when he returns, towing his load behind him, to the ship. The men work with a will, giving themselves scarcely time to eat or rest, for they receive a share of the profits according to the number of seals that each man brings in, and if the season is successful, an active and daring man will make a large sum of money. The seals are valuable only for the oil which is tried out of their fat, and which is employed for various lubricating purposes, and for their skins, which are tanned and used principally, I believe, for shoe leather. They do not produce the pelt which, when plucked and dyed, is worked up into those lovely sealskin jackets that are as destructive to the purse as they are delightful to the eye. The number of seals brought in annually is very great, as many as 500,000 having been killed in a single season, and the business employs nearly 10,000 men. What becomes of the multitude of surviving seals is a problem I have never heard satisfactorily solved. The ice, on which they come down in swarms every year from the north, melts during the summer months soon after coming in contact with the warm waters of the Gulf Stream. What then becomes of the seals? Do they find their way back through thousands

of watery miles to their polar birthplace, or do they remain scattered about along the shores of Newfoundland and the neighbouring continent? It is a problem in natural history similar to the eel puzzle at home, for we are still in ignorance as to what becomes of the millions of full-grown eels that descend our rivers with each autumn flood, but which are never seen reascending the stream.

We remained some days in the interesting city of St. John's, much enjoying the kind hospitality of our friends, but waiting somewhat anxiously for an opportunity to get a lift down the coast to the neighbourhood of our proposed hunting-grounds. The regular fortnightly steamer did not call in anywhere near our destination, and day after day passed without any coasting vessel sailing in that direction. From this dilemma we were relieved by the kindness of a judge who was about to start on his circuit in one of the harbour tugs, and who very good-naturedly undertook to put us ashore at the mouth of the river we wished to ascend. This offer was most thankfully accepted, and shortly after, my friend and I, with three Micmac Indians from Bay of Despair, two birch-bark canoes, one month's provisions and a very limited supply of baggage, steamed out of the picturesque

harbour of St. John's in the august society of the judge and all the functionaries of his court. The whole court was there assembled, including judge, barristers, lawyers, clerks, and all—everybody, in fact, except the criminals and the jurymen; and it really was a pity they could not have been provided also; it would have saved such a lot of time and trouble. As far as I could see, there was very little work for the court to do. We would stop occasionally, apparently at any nice likely-looking spot for a malefactor, and send on shore to see if there was any demand for our commodity, namely, justice. Generally we were informed that the inhabitants did not require any just at present, but that perhaps if we would call again another time a little later, we might be more fortunate; and then we would give three hideous steam whistles by way of a parting benediction, and plough our way through the yielding billows to some other settlement, where, if we were lucky, the court would divest itself of oilskin coats and sou'-westers, and go ashore to dispose of the case or cases to be tried.

We were a very jolly party, and amused ourselves by lounging about the little deck enjoying the fresh air and grand wild coast scenery, reading

"dime novels" and playing cards in the stifling saloon below, where we were veritably "cribbed, cabined, and confined"—stuffed as close as herrings in a cask. There was something rather comical in the whole proceeding. To my insular and antiquated notions, a judge is an awful form clad in a solemn wig and wrapped in gorgeous robes and the majesty of the law, and barristers and the whole *personnel* of a court of justice are superhuman creatures, extraordinary mortals to be looked upon with wonder not unmixed with awe; and to see eminent counsel staggering about the slippery deck in long boots and guernsey frocks, and the highest functionary of the law condescending to exchange remarks concerning the weather with grimy stokers and tarry-breeched seamen, and even experiencing inner qualms and spasms when our little ship tossed and struggled across some wide exposed bay, quite destroyed my illusions, and produced a feeling of somewhat irreverent amusement. The mere fact of the judge going his circuit in a tug-steamer appeared strange and incongruous, though why he should not go in a steamer just as naturally as in a train or a coach-and-four, I do not know. Indeed, it was the natural mode of progression in Newfoundland,

where the ocean is, or was at the time of my visit, the principal highway. Roads in those days—and I am thinking of events which happened some years ago—there were none, except in the vicinity of St. John's and one or two other towns. People who, for their sins, had to go from one part of the island to another, travelled in the most uncertain, vague, and promiscuous manner, sometimes taking days, weeks, or even months, in accomplishing quite a short distance, and sometimes never getting to their destination at all. The usual method of procedure appeared to be to embark in the coasting steamer, and go ashore as near the place you wished to visit as the route pursued by the steamer would permit. The traveller might by that means get within ten or twenty or fifty or one hundred miles of his destination, as the case might be. He would then betake himself to a house or cabin, if there happened to be one in the neighbourhood, and wait there, or he would build a big fire and sit on a rock until some coasting schooner, or fishing smack, or open boat happened to pass by, going in the right direction, in which he would embark and get another lift upon his road. By such means he would eventually accomplish his object if he was lucky; but if, unluckily, no craft

going the right way came by, he would be compelled to take a passage in some vessel or boat bound in exactly the opposite direction to that in which he wished to move. I remember we called in at some place or other—I forget the name—on our way back to St. John's, after our hunting expedition, and a clergyman came on board begging for a passage. "I understand," he said, "that you are bound round the north end of the island to Halifax. It is rather out of my way to go there, it is true, for my destination is a few miles south of this; but I have been waiting here till I am sick and tired of it, for a chance of a lift down the coast, and I shall be truly obliged to you if you will take me to Halifax, where I can get the fortnightly Allan steamer to St. John's, which will be better, at any rate, than waiting here indefinitely."

We replied that we were bound for St. John's and not for Halifax, as he had supposed, and that we should be delighted to take him on board. "Oh," he cried joyfully, "that is charming, it will suit me much better of course to go straight to St. John's. I have been wandering about for weeks and weeks trying to get to my parish, which is not far from here. I was staying in St. John's on a visit to

some friends, when I received a message saying that one of my parishioners was dead and required to be buried. As the necessities of the case were pressing, I took my passage in the coasting steamer that left the following morning, and ought to have arrived at my destination the same night. Unfortunately, however, a strong off-shore breeze sprang up, and the steamer being unable to call in carried me some distance up the coast to the next stopping-place. Then I was delayed some days till I got a lift in a fishing schooner, but she was driven by stress of weather into some little harbour where no steamers called, and eventually went off in a direction that did not suit me at all. The same bad luck has pursued me all along, and I have been wandering about ever since, taking every opportunity offered me by passing coasting craft or fishing-boats; sometimes being carried miles away, sometimes getting pretty near, but never succeeding in actually reaching my journey's end. As the season is getting late and winter will soon be upon us, I made up my mind to abandon the attempt for the present, and go round with you to Halifax, if you would take me, and so back to St. John's to finish my visit; for as it is now a couple of months or so since my services

were required to bury the gentleman, it is probable that my presence is no longer necessary on that account." We were much more astonished than was our guest at the extraordinary delays and troubles to which he had been subjected, but after becoming a little better acquainted with Newfoundland, we perceived that there was nothing so very unusual in his misfortunes after all, and that similar experiences were looked upon with a calm and philosophical spirit by the natives.

It was late in the afternoon of a beautiful, still, warm autumn day that the *Hercules* dropped her anchor in the Bay, and after putting us safely ashore with our Indians, canoes, and baggage, and after three hearty cheers and three hideous ear-splitting screams from the whistle, steamed away out to sea again and left us to our own devices. There was quite a settlement in those parts, consisting of a small saw-mill and house adjoining inhabited by the white man who ran the mill, and of two or three families of Indians, all rejoicing in the name of Joe. The head of the tribe was old Abraham Joe, a fine specimen of his race, an active upright man, standing about six feet two inches in his moccasins, and broad and strong in proportion. He had spent nearly all his life in Newfoundland.

and knew the interior of the island better than any man living. He was a good hunter, trapper, and guide, but he was—well, he is dead, and I will put it mildly—he had the bump of acquisitiveness highly developed. They had, I should imagine, a very pleasant life, these Indians ; and if one can judge by the independence of the men, and the nature and quality of the clothing worn by the girls, they must have been very well off in this world's goods. They had comfortable little cabins, in which they spent the winter in comparative idleness, earning little or nothing. The single exception to this rule was in the case of one of old Abraham Joe's sons, who carried the mail during the winter and spring months between St. John's and the copper-mines at the entrance of the Bay. He was well paid, and deservedly so, for his was an arduous task. Travelling on snow-shoes backwards and forwards over a distance of some hundreds of long, weary, desolate, monotonous miles, over bare wind-swept barrens, through dense pine forests and thick alder swamps, without a mark to guide or a hut to shelter the traveller ; tramping on alone with no companion to cheer one on the lonely way, without the chance even of seeing a human being from one end of the journey to the other ; struggling along from dawn

to dark of the short wintry days against snow, storm, or sleet, or in the bitter cold of hard frosty weather; crouching through the long nights by a solitary fire with a few bushes stuck in the snow for shelter; caught perhaps in some sudden thaw, when the softened snow clogs and sticks in the netting of the snow-shoes, and progress is almost impossible; exposed to *mal de raquette*, snow blindness, and all the chances of a forest life—such an occupation is one that fully deserves to be well paid. However, the activity of this particular "Joe" was abnormal; the rest of the family spent their winters lounging about the beach, making perhaps a few mast hoops, butter tubs, or fish barrels, or sitting by the stove indoors, smoking their pipes and doing nothing. In the summer they fished a little, and in the autumn the whole community went up Indian brook and spent two months in the interior of the island, shooting and trapping beavers and otters. Fur was pretty plentiful in those days, and a man could make a good income out of a couple of months' hard work, furring in the fall. These "Joes" appeared to entertain, to a limited extent, communistic principles, while partially recognising at the same time the right of private ownership in land and chattels. They would

use each other's boats, canoes, &c. without hesitation, but spoke of them nevertheless as belonging to some individual member of the sept. They wandered about the island in an apparently haphazard, aimless, happy-go-lucky way, and some member or other of the family was always turning up at odd times in unexpected places. Sometimes we would meet a Joe striding over some barren or crossing a lake in his canoe; occasionally a Joe would drop into our camp, miles away from anywhere, unprovided with boat, canoe, provisions or baggage of any kind, and furnished only with a pipe, tobacco, a rusty gun, and some powder and lead. He would sit down quietly by the fire and chat a little and smoke a little, and after a while accept, with apparent insouciance, an invitation to eat and drink, and after consuming enough food for three men and swallowing a few quarts of tea, would say, "Well, I suppose I shall be going now. Adieu, gentlemen, adieu. Yes, I guess I was pretty hungry; most starved, I expect. How am I going to cross the lake? Oh, that's all right; we—that's old Peter John Joe's son, and I—got a canoe a little way off; mebbe one, two, three, four miles; I'll cross in her, I reckon. Expect likely I'll see you again by and by—I shall be coming out again

about the end of this moon." "Well, good-bye," said we, "but where are you going to? not trapping, evidently, because you have got no traps." "Yes, I'm a going a trapping, that's so. Not far—mebbe two or three days back in the woods—beaver pretty plenty there; left my traps there last fall—no, let me see, fall before last, I guess." "But what are you going to live on all the time?" "Oh, I got plenty grub, no fear; not much tea, though" (showing a little parcel of the fragrant herb knotted up in a corner of his dirty blanket), "and no sweetening: mebbe you could spare a little tea and sugar, eh? No! ah well, all the same, never mind, suppose my tea give out, perhaps make some spruce tea. You see young John Joe, he got a *cache* yonder, away off just across that blue ridge, about one day or one day and a half, or mebbe two days' journey, plenty flour there; and young Peter John Joe and old John Peter Joe, they *cached* their cooking-pots on the little stream there, near the north end of big blueberry pond. See you again soon. Adieu!" and after a few words in Micmac to our Indians, this particular Joe would walk off, to be seen no more till he reappeared after some time with half a canoe load of beaver skins, or perhaps to turn up quite unexpectedly in the course

of a day or two, in company with some other Joe whom he had come across promiscuous-like in the woods. Over this small community and large territory old Abraham Joe ruled after the manner of a feudal lord, settling all little disputes and parcelling out the country into hunting-grounds for each individual member of his family. Indians are very tenacious of their territorial rights: each man has his own hunting, or rather furring, ground accurately marked out with the marches carefully fixed, perhaps up one river from its mouth to its source, then across in a straight line through the woods to some other creek, and down that stream to such and such a lake, and so on; the boundaries are all arranged among themselves, and it is considered a most iniquitous proceeding for one trapper to trespass on the district belonging to another. Their system of land tenure is similar to that of most primitive peoples in tribal times. They consider that the land belongs in common to the clan, but each member has a certain part of it allotted to him for his temporary use, and he possesses a limited life-ownership over his own particular share. Poor old Abraham Joe was very unhappy about the state of things in Newfoundland. Too much civilisation was destroying the

island, in his estimation. "Yes, sir," he said to me one day, "things is very different from what they used to be. Lord! I mind the times when a man might travel from one end of the island to the other and never see nobody nowheres. Beavers were plenty then, and there was a good price for fur too; now there ain't no price, and beavers and otters ain't plenty like they used to be. Those d—— lumbermen be come up the rivers and scare the game. Why, there ain't a bay scarcely anywheres without one, mebbe even two liviers[1] in it. Yes, sir, it's true; Newfoundland he spoil, too much people come, too much people altogether in the country, no use furring any more, no price now for beaver skins, very bad times now, most impossible to make a living. Expect you don't want that axe-head, do you, sir? It would come in very handy. I lost mine the other day—head flew clean off the handle into the water. Can't do without it, can't you? Well, never mind; mebbe you won't want to take your canoes out of the country. I'd like to trade with you for one of them." He became a positive nuisance, did the old man, about the axe-head, and followed us

[1] A "livier" signifies a person who lives all the year round in a locality, in contradistinction to one who only visits it during the fishing season.

about for days on the chance of getting it for nothing, pleading awful poverty, at the same time that he refused an offer of four dollars a day to come with us for a short time hunting.

The sole representatives of the Joe tribe left at home on the evening of our arrival were an old woman and two girls of about eighteen or twenty, whose clear complexions and good features I must suppose were to be accounted for by some mysterious influence exercised by the superior over the inferior race, for I should be sorry to indulge for a moment even in speculation which might be derogatory to the conduct and character of former generations of Joes. On inquiry, we found that most of the family had gone off some days before to the copper mines, to solemnise the wedding of a couple of fond and youthful Joes, and were expected home that night. About midnight they returned; two large whale-boats full of them, rather noisy and very jovial. The unfortunate but loving Joes had not succeeded in getting married, as the priest, who was expected to arrive by the coasting steamer, had failed to put in an appearance; but nowise discouraged by this untoward event, the party had consumed the wedding breakfast, wisely deciding that the ceremony

might keep, but the viands would not. The bride and bridegroom bore their disappointment with a philosophical composure to be found only among people who attach no value whatever to time. In answer to our condolence they replied, "Oh, no matter; mebbe he come next steamer, mebbe in two, three months, mebbe not come till next year," and dismissed the subject as though it were a matter of no importance whatever to them.

We tried hard to obtain the services of some able-bodied Joe, but they were all bent on going into the woods to hunt beaver on their own account, and nothing would induce any of the men to take service with us. We might have had our pick of the women, and we regretted afterwards that we had not engaged a couple of girls. They are just as well acquainted with the country as the men; they can paddle a canoe and do all that a man can, except carry loads, and are able to fulfil certain duties that a man cannot—for instance, they can cook, tan hides, and wash and mend clothes. We often regretted afterwards that we had gone into the country without a guide. The Joes would not give our Indians any accurate instructions, and although an Indian in St. John's

had explained the route to me as well as he could, it is so difficult for a white man to understand an Indian's description of a country, that my ideas on the subject were very vague and hazy. An Indian thinks little of the points of the compass, and uses them very inaccurately. He seems to rely rather upon the prominent landmarks and principal features of the country to find his way about, and attempts to explain the route by reference to solitary pines, high hills, hard wood ridges, swamps, and streams. In saying that a river runs south-west, he probably is taking it the reverse way, counting from the mouth to the source, and really means that it has a north-east course; and he invariably calls all the tributaries of a river by one and the same name: a fact which leads to infinite confusion. However, we determined to trust to luck to find our way to the hunting-grounds, and, after spending all the forenoon in patching up canoes and arranging the baggage in suitable-sized bundles, we made a start late in the afternoon, poled up to a picturesque fall some four miles from the mouth of the stream, made our "portage" round it and camped for the night. It was a lovely evening, and we thoroughly enjoyed it as we lay on our comfortable beds of *sapin*,

gazing, through the transparent walls of our tent, at the moonlight mingling with the flickering flames of the camp fire, listening to the whisper of the wind among the trees, and the distant drowsy varying music of the fall, smoking our pipes in placid contentment, delighted that at last we were fairly launched into the woods.

We got along very nicely for the next two days, though our progress was not rapid, but on the third day the brook became so shallow that we had great difficulty in advancing any farther. The channel was almost dry in places, and we had to wade all day, heaving stones out of the way, pushing and pulling our heavily laden canoes by hand, carefully manœuvring them among the rocks, and wriggling our way very slowly up the lessening stream. It was evident that we must be near the head of navigation, and my companion and I splashed on ahead in the bed of the stream to look out for the "portage." We walked and walked till we felt sure that we must have passed the "carry," and were on the point of turning back when I espied a swarthy countenance peering cautiously at us through an alder bush. "Bojour!" said we, and "Bojour!" answered old Abraham Joe, emerging from his covert. "Where are you going to?" "Well,"

we replied, "we don't exactly know where we are going to, but we are looking for the 'portage.' Is it anywhere near here?" "Yes," said he, "close handy, just a little ways up the stream. Water very low, ain't it? Plenty rain pretty soon, and then have good water in the brook. You going hunting, I guess? Not much good, deer all gone. You wait, by and by we get through hunting; mebbe one of my sons show you where to find plenty. Mebbe I go with you myself," added the old man, with an air that seemed to say, "There, just think of that: there's a chance you don't get every day of the week." We camped that night on the portage, and the next day "carried" over to a neighbouring lake in a drenching rain, and pitched our tent close to the camp of the patriarch and certain other members of the Joe family. The old man's prophecy of "plenty rain come soon" was abundantly fulfilled during the next three days, for it rained and blew, and blew and rained, the whole time without ceasing. The natives did not seem to mind it in the least, but lounged about in the wet as unconcernedly as if water was their natural element. I remember going over to old Joe's tent one morning for something or other, and finding a little French boy that

he had with him lying outside by the dead sodden ashes of the fire, in a most uncomfortable attitude, leaning on his elbow with his head supported by his hand, drenched of course to the skin through his tattered clothing, and shivering with cold, but sleeping soundly all the same. "Why, Joe," I said, "what a shame to keep that miserable little boy out in the cold and wet all night." "Oh," he replied, "he don't mind; he hard, hard all the same as one d—— dog: do him good."

We remained a few days on the shores of the lake, but finding no sign of game, crossed to the opposite side, made a short "portage" to another lake, traversed that, and after a long and toilsome tramp over land of some eight or ten miles, arrived at what we hoped would prove our final destination. What a lovely hunting country it was! Not more than half a mile from our camp, which was placed in a nicely sheltered little island of wood, rose a steep hill, which commanded an unobstructed view over miles of open country. Bare, dry, barren, the surface principally composed of rock covered with lichens on which the reindeer feed, alternating with patches of softer ground carpeted with the beautiful ivory white caribou moss, shallow pools and trickling streams, sheltered

depressions in the plain supporting a sparse growth of junipers and dwarf pines, combined to form a perfect paradise for game. But, alas! it turned out to be an empty Eden. Day after day we wore out our moccasins tramping over the stony ground, seeking for a sign but finding none; day after day we climbed the look-out hill and vainly swept the plain with our glasses. That game had once been abundant was very evident, for the plain was crossed in all directions by paths worn deep into the surface by the countless feet of constantly passing herds of caribou, but now rapidly filling up through long disuse. Patches of sun-dried clay showed footprints that had been made long before our arrival; the tattered bark and broken branches of many a pine-tree showed where a great stag had rubbed his horns, but the scars were all old and brown; numerous horns lay scattered about in evidence of how plentiful the deer must have been at one time, but they were bleached by the sun, weather-worn and half-consumed. It was plain enough that deer had once frequented those plains in great numbers, but it was equally certain that not a deer had visited them for months. The great barrens on which we were hunting—if a man can be said to be hunting when there is nothing to hunt—stretch nearly right across

the island from east to west, and occupy all the country from north to south between Grand Pond, a magnificent lake of some eighty miles in length, and Red Indian Pond. The extent of hunting country is very large; and, thinking that surely there must be some herds of deer out on the barrens somewhere, we made expeditions from the main camp of a day or two's journey, and thoroughly searched the country in all directions. It was in vain; not a fresh track did we find. We proved that there was not a herd of caribou within twenty miles or more of us, and, after spending a fortnight of our valuable time in a most unprofitable manner, we packed up our goods, and with weary and dispirited steps returned to our canoes, made the best of our way back to Joe's camp, and after resting a day, started in the teeth of a fierce gale for Grand Pond.

Our course led us through a splendid game country. We camped at nights in the very passages through which, in former days, the caribou used to pass in countless numbers during their annual autumn migration from the north to the south side of the island, but we were a day too late for the fair. Lumber-men were cutting timber on the shores of Deer Pond and rafting it down the broad current

of the Humber; white men had invaded those solitudes, and the caribou had abandoned them in disgust. We made a nice camp at the north end of Grand Pond at the mouth of a little stream from which a faint trail, blazed some ten or perhaps twenty years before by a wandering Indian, led up through the pine woods to the open barren above, and there we stayed for a week, during which time we saw three hinds and killed one of them. The flesh was welcome, for we had been living all the time on beaver meat; but what we wanted was one or two of the gigantic heads for which the Newfoundland stags are so famous; and as it did not appear likely that we should be successful in that district, we packed up for the third time, paddled some ten or twelve miles down the lake, lugged our tent, bedding, and cooking things up a steep hillside, and camped just on the edge of the barren, about a thousand feet above the lake, determined to make one more attempt. The next morning my friend, accompanied by one of our Indians, started in one direction, while young Joe John—who had joined us for a few days—and I tried our luck in another.

It was a lovely morning as we cleared the woods and emerged upon the open breezy barren. The

sky was cloudless: we could see for miles round to the south of us and across the lake to the north, but the surface of the water was hidden by a veil—not of mist, but of thick solid-looking cloud. The effect was curious, for the whole valley of the lake was filled with a bank of white motionless cloud, so level that it looked as if the water had been turned into milk. Suddenly, as the sun rose higher, this mass began to move—to roll about and lift a little in places—and then, almost instantaneously, it all broke up, curled off in wreaths, vanished in thin air, and disclosed the placid deep-blue surface of the water beneath. We had not walked far before we discovered three stags standing distinct against the sky-line on a distant ridge. The ground was so level and so bare of cover, that it was impossible to get near them unperceived, and I was obliged to content myself with a long shot. I fired both barrels, and, to my disgust, saw all three deer trot quietly off together. After a while they wheeled round and stood looking back to see what was the matter, and gave me a chance for another long shot, which seemed to satisfy their curiosity, for they turned at once and disappeared over a little rise. An expression more emphatic than polite escaped my lips, I

fear; but Joe only smiled, and said, "How many deer went over the rise? Three, eh? I only see two now going up the other side: one stop down in the hollow; mebbe you hit him, or what he stop down there for?" "By Jove! Joe, you are right," cried I. "Let's after him." "No, no; he all right—he safe enough; bound to get him by and by. Let's go after the other two. They won't go far, not much scared—no wind, you know—and not much afraid of the noise." The stags in truth were not much alarmed, and moreover they were so fat, so preposterously fat, that they literally could scarcely run away; and after a very hard chase, keeping ourselves as much as possible out of sight, we got within range again and bagged another stag. While Joe was engaged upon the dead body of the deer, I noticed some object moving a long way off, and with the glass made out two men, one looking towards us, while the other was stooping and working at something on the ground. "Hurrah, Joe!" said I, "they have got the other one. Not a bad bag after all, to finish up an unsuccessful hunt. Luck has turned at last. Plenty of fresh meat for supper to-night, Joe." "Yes," muttered Joe, with his bloody knife between his teeth, "glad of it too.

I have not tasted a bit of fresh meat this year: most tired of chewing beaver meat; you got two days more, eh? Well, we go out again to-morrow; leave the other men to fetch the meat in and mebbe get something more. Suppose you let me have the skins to make snow-shoes: must beat out for something to make snow-shoes this winter. No deer left in this country now." So Joe worked away gralloching the deer, while I, having made a little smudge of dry lichens and moss to windward to keep off the swarms of black flies that pestered us, smoked my pipe, happy in the certainty that we should not suffer the disgrace of returning to St. John's quite empty-handed.

Scarcely had Joe and I got well away from the camp next morning, when such a blinding storm of rain came on that we were compelled to make a little shelter for ourselves among some dwarf junipers and wait till it was over. We lit a little fire, boiled some water in a pannikin, brewed some tea, and talked about hunting until the clouds lifted and enabled us to see our way about the country; but the best part of the day was gone, and we had to return to camp without seeing anything or even a fresh track. The day following we were obliged to set out on our homeward

journey, for we had left ourselves only just time enough to catch the tug steamer which was to call for us in the bay, even by travelling almost night and day; but as I was loath to quit the country without one more try, Joe and I climbed up to the barren before daylight, leaving the others to pack up, carry the baggage and meat down to the lake, and get everything ready for a start in the afternoon. Joe got the best of me that day to the extent of twenty-five dollars, the villain. We had walked for hours without seeing a thing, when he remarked in a casual manner, "You have not seen no bears, have you, since you came in the island?" "No, Joe," I replied, "not even a sign. I should have thought bears would have been plenty enough; there is lots of feed for them, goodness knows, for the whole barren is covered with blueberries; but they seem to be very scarce." "Yes," answered Joe, "bear's awful scarce in Newfoundland, but I think I know a place where we might find one, only I ain't got much time; want to get back to my beaver trapping, you know. What you give me if I show you a bear?" "Oh, well," I said, "I don't know; there is no chance of that now; but I would give a five-pound note for a shot at

a bear if we had time to look for one." "All right," said Joe; "suppose I show you a bear within shot, you give me five pounds, eh?" "Yes, Joe, certainly I will," replied I. "That's sure, eh?" "Yes." "Well, look yonder." And following the direction of Joe's extended hand, I saw a little black speck moving about near the summit of a neighbouring mountain. "Oh, I say, Joe, that is rather too bad," I remonstrated. "I could have seen him just as well as you, and got up to him too, for that matter. However, a bargain is a bargain, so let us go for him." The ground was very bare and open, but Bruin (or "Mouin," as the Indians call him) was so busily engaged eating blueberries, that he allowed us to crawl up pretty near. I had to wait some time for a shot, for the bear would not stand still for a second, but kept turning himself about restlessly, moving rapidly from bush to bush, grumbling to himself the while—complaining, no doubt, about the scarcity of berries that autumn and the difficulty of filling his ravenous inside. At last I got a good opportunity, but made a bad shot, striking the animal too low down on the shoulder, and only breaking his leg. With a violent snort of pain and astonishment, but without looking round

for a second to see what was the matter, away went "Mouin" down the mountain side at a most surprising pace. "Come on," yelled Joe. "Try and head him off; if he once gets down into the timber he is gone sure." And away we went after him as hard as we could tear. How Joe jumped and bounded and yelled, and how the bear did put out down that hill-side! He seemed to go twice as fast on three legs as any other animal ever went on four. Sometimes Joe would head the bear and turn him, sometimes the bear would make a drive at Joe and turn him, which would give me time to get up; and so we went on yelling and whooping and plunging through the tangled matted junipers, the bear doubling and twisting, and sometimes charging us, but always struggling gallantly to gain the shelter of the woods. We had the best of Bruin as long as we were on the bare ground near the top, but when we got among the junipers growing horizontally like creepers along the ground, not rising more than three or four feet above the surface, but with stems as thick as your leg, and interlacing branches as hard and springy as steel, then the bear got so much the best of us, that we feared we should lose him. Now and then I would get a shot, but

shooting under such circumstances is chance work, and I missed the bear several times, until at last with a lucky shot I rolled him over, and Joe and I threw ourselves down exhausted beside his dead body. Joe's first action was to be violently sea-sick; he then sat him down on a rock, filled and lit his pipe, and gasped out, "Oh, I thought we should have taken off our breeches!" I stared at Joe, thinking his exertions had produced a fit of temporary insanity, and said, "Why, Joe, what on earth should we take off our breeches for?" "What for?—Why, suppose you not got any breeches on, you run heap faster. Best always take 'em off before shooting at a bear: he run such a devil of a pace if you only wound him." And so, having rested a little and skinned our bear, and packed the hide and some meat on our backs, we scrambled down to the shore, chucked our burdens into the canoes lying ready laden, and paddled off under the light of a rising moon.

Our canoes were deep in the water. A straight course led us far from shore, and once or twice my heart leaped into my throat with a horrid feeling of apprehension, at the sudden unearthly scream of a startled loon, sounding exactly like a human shriek of agony denoting the capsize of one of the

following canoes; but no such untoward accident occurred, and after some hours of paddling we drew up our boats at our old camp near the head of the lake, made a fire, cooked and ate our supper, and after a couple of hours' sleep started again the following morning, about two hours before dawn. We had hard work on that day's journey. The river was very rapid: our course lay up stream, and we had to pole all the way. It is not easy for a novice to stand upright in a small birch-bark canoe, but after a little practice he gets his canoe legs, and learns not only to balance himself without danger to the frail craft, but to exert in safety the whole of his strength in forcing her up some rapid stream. It is astonishing to see the apparent ease with which two good men will drive a canoe up a rapid. They approach it in the same way as does a fish, stealing quietly up, husbanding their strength, and taking advantage of every little eddy to get as close to the fall as possible; and then make a rush out into the stream without any hurry, plashing, or confusion, but with quiet, methodical, concentrated strength. Once out in the full force of the current, and the struggle begins. For a few yards the momentum of the canoe carries her on; then she stops, the

men throw their whole weight upon their poles, that bend beneath them and tremble in the glancing stream; the water hisses by the side, and curls up in front of the prow as the canoe is forced up inch by inch against the tide. Hold on now in the stern, while the bow-man takes a fresh hold. Down slips the canoe half a fathom, while the man in the stern snatches his pole from the water and drives it fiercely down again and holds her up once more against the torrent. Perhaps his pole slips, or gets jammed between two stones, or in spite of all their efforts to keep her end-on to the stream, the boat's head slews a little on one side, and away you float helplessly down stream, only to make another effort, and if necessary another and another, until the obstacle is overcome. At last it is overcome: inch by inch, foot by foot, yard by yard, the quivering bark struggles up, till with a final powerful shove she is lifted over the break of the fall, and glides into still water above. The three principles of poling are: first, never to put out your strength until you know, by the feel of it, that your pole is firmly fixed, and does not rest on some loose or smooth and slippery stone. Secondly, to be careful to exert your force in a line parallel with the keel of

the canoe, and to keep your pole perpendicularly under you, so that you can draw the canoe towards it or push her away, according as you may wish. If you plant your pole too far out or too much under the canoe, and throw your weight across her or hang over on your own side, a capsize is probable, if not inevitable. Thirdly, if your pole gets jammed and you cannot snatch it out in a second, let go instantly; for if you hold on and drag at it, either the canoe will upset or she will slip in the most miraculous manner from under your feet, and you will find yourself suspended for a second in space, and then plunged into a raging flood.

We made camp early that afternoon, for the work had been very severe, and we needed rest; but seeing a lot of salmon on the shallows, we determined, in spite of fatigue, to do a little bit of poaching and burn the water before turning in. An Indian fish-spear is a very simple affair, but it is far superior to any civilised instrument of the same kind. It consists of a straight iron spike about six inches long, let into the end of a pole of ash, or some other heavy wood, and two wooden jaws lashed one on each side of the spike. These jaws must be made of some tough elastic material, and are so shaped

as to be furnished with broad barbs on the inner sides. There is a space of about six inches between the points of the jaws, which project an inch or two beyond the end of the iron spike, but the barbs are not more than a couple of inches apart; beyond and inside the barbs the jaws open out again to a breadth of about four or five inches. When a fish is fairly struck, the wooden jaws expand, the iron spike transfixes him, the weight of the blow forces him up above the barbs, and the jaws, closing in again, hold him as fast as though he were in a vice. This kind of spear is very light and handy. It holds a salmon as securely as any lyster, and it does not gash and mangle the fish. The material for the wooden portion of our spear was not difficult to procure, but we were puzzled to find anything that would do for the indispensable iron spike, and at last had to make up our minds to sacrifice the handle of the frying-pan. No sooner said than done. In a few minutes the rivets were knocked out, and the handle stuck in the embers of the fire. While some of us were manufacturing the spike by beating out the handle on an axe-head and afterwards grinding it to a sharp point on a smooth stone, one of the Indians was hard at work making the pole and jaws with his hatchet and

crooked knife. With these two implements an Indian will make anything. I have often watched with admiration a man fell a maple-tree, and in an hour or two turn out a smooth, delicately poised, accurately shaped axe-haft or paddle, with the help of no other tools than his axe and his crooked knife, an instrument which he generally makes for himself out of a file, and which resembles in shape the drawing knife of a shoeing smith. There is one peculiarity about the red man worth mentioning, namely, that in using a knife he invariably cuts towards his body, while a white man always cuts away from his. The Indians of all the coast provinces are skilful workmen with the crooked knife, and earn a good deal of money by making butter firkins, tubs, mast-hoops, and various articles of a similar nature.

By sunset we had finished our spear, and had collected a good supply of birch bark; and as soon as it was dark a couple of us launched a canoe, and after lighting a bunch of birch bark stuck in a cleft stick in the bow of the boat to act as a torch, started on our poaching expedition. We all of us had a turn at spearing, and most comical attempts we made. An empty canoe is possessed by a most malignant spirit of perversity: it floats light as a

dry leaf upon the water, and spins round and round, and insists on going in the wrong direction, and displays a propensity to slip suddenly from under your feet, and in fact behaves altogether in a very fickle and cantankerous manner. Mishaps, though frequent, were only ludicrous; for the water was shallow, salmon were numerous, and in spite of our awkwardness we had fresh fish for supper that night. We made good progress next day, and arrived at our old camp on the first lake about sunset. It rained in perfect torrents that night, and we had a most uncomfortable time of it, carrying across to Indian Brook. The water had fallen so much since we were there, that we found it necessary to make a portage of six miles instead of two, so as to strike the river lower down. It is no joke carrying canoes six miles over a rough ground, and though our Indians worked splendidly, it did not want many hours to dawn by the time we had got everything across, and were changing wet clothes for damp ones, and trying to dry ourselves before a huge fire, under the partial shelter of a hastily arranged lean-to. If we had only known that it was going to rain so hard, we might have been spared the trouble of making the long portage, for when day broke we found the stream had risen at least a foot, and was

coming down in a torrent that bore us rapidly towards the sea. It was getting dusk when we approached the most ticklish part of the navigation : we might truthfully have sung—

> " Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast,
> The rapids are near and the daylight past " ;

and under any other circumstances we would have camped for the night ; but we were so anxious to save our time with the steamer, that we determined to chance the rapids, and kept on our way after dark. It was a lovely night—a night the very memory of which is soothing to the heart : a night such as can be seen only in high latitudes ; for, in spite of all the poetry that has been written on the subject, I maintain that no sultry southern night can compare in beauty with the great glory of the moonlit or star-studded heavens revealed through the clear and frosty atmosphere of the icy north. The broad friendly moon rose above the pine trees, climbed up among the stars, drowning their feeble beams with a deepening flood of radiance, and hung suspended in the heavens, a globe of mellow light, searching out the secrets of the forest, shining white on some fir-tree bleached and dead, throwing black and awful looking shadows from the living

pines, glimmering on the ragged bark and creamy stems of birch-trees, casting the river fringe of alders into deepest gloom, tracing bands of silver across still reaches of the stream, dancing and flickering on the rapids, glittering like diamonds on frozen raindrops clinging to the stiffening blades of grass, half revealing strange mysterious forms, dimly unveiling misty distances, and shedding a peaceful softened lustre over the whole scene. The night was still. Silence settled down upon the earth with the sinking sun—a silence broken now and then by the plunge of an otter, the hoot of an owl, the rise of some startled wild fowl from the sedge, or the snapping of a dead stick under the light footfall of some beast of the forest, disturbed by the occasional splash of the steersman's paddle. So, drinking in the beauties of the night, we drifted quietly on till the quickening current warned us to concentrate all our thoughts upon our own safety. The moonlight was so bright, and objects were so distinctly visible as long as we were in still water, that we anticipated but little difficulty in running the rapids, which are not the least dangerous by day; but as soon as we got among them the difference between the light of even a cloudy day and the clearest night

became very evident. Our canoes were deeply laden, and so heavy that it was impossible to check them in the strength of the stream; and we flew down with such velocity that there was no time to pick a channel, and one found oneself right on top of some rock or boiling eddy almost at the same instant that the eye caught sight of the danger. Yet our progress was slow, for in many places the river spreads out over broad shallows, and there we had to go very cautiously, creeping along, holding the canoe back with the paddles, grounding now and then, and having to back off and seek some deeper place; and it was long past midnight when a distant welcome roar showed we were approaching the fall. There we went ashore, made a fire, brewed some strong green tea, rested for half an hour, and then, having made the short "portage," launched our canoes again below the fall. As bad luck would have it, the tide was out, and we had to pick our way over great flats of sand miles in breadth, covered by only two or three inches of water, through which a little narrow shallow channel went meandering to the sea. It was tedious work, and it was four o'clock in the morning when we got into deep water, paddled alongside the tug, roused up the crew, tumbled up

on deck, and turned into our bunks below, thoroughly tired out.

So ended our hunting trip in Newfoundland. It was not very successful; three caribou heads and one bearskin were all the trophies we had to show. We could not congratulate ourselves upon the amount of game killed, but at any rate we did not come back empty-handed, and we had seen something of the country and had enjoyed a very pleasant month in the woods.

Newfoundland is not much visited by Englishmen. I know not why, for it is the nearest and most accessible of all their colonies, and it offers a good field for exploration and for sport. The interior of a great part of the island, all the northern part of it in fact, is almost unknown. The variety of game is not great, there are no moose or small deer, and bears are, strange to say, very scarce; but caribou are plentiful, and the Newfoundland stags are finer by far than any to be found on any portion of the continent of North America. The caribou, or reindeer, are getting scarce, as they are also in every other accessible place. Constant travel across the island interferes with their annual migration from north to south and from south to north. They are no longer to be seen crossing

Sandy Pond in vast herds in the spring and fall, but no doubt they are still pretty plentiful in some remote parts of the country. The shores of Newfoundland are indented with numerous and excellent harbours, the interior is full of lakes and is traversed by many streams navigable for canoes, fur is pretty plentiful, wild fowl and grouse abundant, and the creeks and rivers are full of salmon and trout.

A great portion of the interior of the island consists of barren, swamp, and water, but there are large tracts of valuable timber, and of good land suitable in every way for farming purposes. The climate is very pleasant in summer and the fall; the winters are cold, though not so severe as on the mainland, but they are protracted far into the spring, through the chilling influence of the great mass of Baffin Bay ice that comes down the coast about the month of March. For that reason, and because the extent of good land is limited, and also on account of the proximity of Prince Edward Island and the mainland, where both soil and climate are better suited to the cultivation of crops, Newfoundland will never be much of an agricultural country. It has great mineral riches, chiefly consisting of copper, which

as yet are only partially developed, but the true source of its wealth and cause of its prosperity is, and always will be, the sea. There is a farm which needs no cultivation, a mine which never "peters out." The hardy Newfoundland fisherman pursues his calling not only among his native bays, but also along the coasts of the Labrador as far north as the entrance into Hudson Straits; and yet, in spite of all his industry and the inexhaustible riches of the sea, he leads a poor, and too often a miserable life. He is generally deeply in debt to the nearest storekeeper, and he is compelled to look on while others reap the harvest drawn from what he, perhaps not unnaturally, considers his own seas. The fishery question in Newfoundland, and in fact the whole state of the country, is in a peculiar condition.

Most Englishmen probably suppose that Newfoundland is a dependency of Great Britain; but that idea is only partially true, for the sovereign rights of the Crown are recognised only over a portion of the island. The fishery rights of France, as settled under the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, still remain in force. Under that treaty the islands of St. Pierre and Miguelon were absolutely secured to France to enable her to pursue the

cod-fishery of the great banks, and she further retained certain vaguely defined rights over that part of the island known as the French coast, namely, the shore from Cape Ray to Cape John, a distance of about 400 miles. The possession of the two islands above mentioned is of the greatest value to France, and at the same time causes no practical inconvenience to the Newfoundlanders. It is true that a great industry has passed from us, and that the fishery on the great banks is almost entirely in the hands of the French, who employ about 300 vessels and 10,000 men—half the number of ships and seamen engaged in their Newfoundland fishery, in that branch of the trade alone; but this is not owing to the convenience offered them by the possession of fishing stations at St. Pierre, or to any lack of industry and enterprise on the part of our men, but is caused by the high bounties given by the French Government, which enable their fishermen to undersell our people, and renders competition on our part useless. The state of things existing on the French shore is, however, looked upon as a real grievance by the English inhabitants of Newfoundland. France claims a strip of land half a mile in width along the whole western seaboard of the

island. She also, practically speaking, owns half the interior of the island. What is the exact nature of the rights which she is entitled to exercise over the foreshore has never yet been determined. It was retained for fishery purposes. The French cannot erect permanent buildings of any kind, but they may set up temporary huts and drying stages, and everything necessary for the accommodation of their men during the fishing season. So much is clearly understood. But whether the French rights are exclusive; or whether the English may also make use of the shore for fishing purposes; or if not, then whether they are also precluded from permanently settling and cultivating land, or working minerals on the French shore, are doubtful points; but they will have to be decided some day, for the state of things which now exists, though it might have been thought little of when Newfoundland was a mere storehouse for salt, and a drying-place for the nets of fishermen who paid it an annual visit, will become unbearable as the island develops and is settled up. It is not the fisheries alone that are concerned. If you make a man absolute master of the door, it is obvious that he practically controls the room within; and as the natural and only outlet for

nearly half the island is through the French shore, it is equally certain that the wealth in mines, timber, and agricultural produce of many thousands of square miles must remain undeveloped until some satisfactory arrangement is arrived at. Thanks to the tendency of treaty makers to scamp their work, and to be content to accept vague generalities and to leave inconvenient details to be dealt with by their successors, a nice muddle exists in Newfoundland. The Crown exercises sovereign right, and the Colonial Parliament extends its rule over a portion only of a British colony. And now, to make confusion worse confounded, we have entered into more vague and ill-defined engagements with the United States. Nobody seems even to know whether American fishermen can exercise their rights subject to or independent of the local laws binding on the natives of Newfoundland. Still less can anyone pretend to say what rights, if any, the United States acquired on the French shore. The Fishery Convention between Great Britain and the United States was of course subject to the provisions of all existing treaties entered into by France and England, and dealing with the fisheries of Newfoundland, but nobody knows what those pro-

visions mean. We may take one view, France a second, Newfoundland a third, and the Government of Washington a fourth. Who is to say which view is correct? The result of this confusion is, that there is no law whatever on the French shore. That country is inhabited by refugees from other parts of the island, and emigrants from Cape Breton or Prince Edward Island, and from Nova Scotia and other portions of the mainland. These people, many of whom had urgent private reasons for thinking a change of domicile desirable, have squatted on the land and appropriated it—stolen it, in fact, from the Crown. Each family or cluster of families forming a little settlement, claims the land about them, the valley probably of the river on the banks of which they dwell, and are fully prepared to uphold their claim. It is a delightfully primitive state of society. No writs run in that happy land, and every man does that which seems best to him in his own eyes. Taxes, however, have been raised, but when the Colonial Parliament passed a Bill giving two members to the district, the Act was at once disallowed by the Home Government, as interfering with the French rights; and the curious spectacle might have been seen of a popu-

lation of British subjects in a colony enjoying free Parliamentary Government, paying taxes, but having no representation whatever. There are many other inconveniences arising from the peculiar circumstances connected with the French shore. The Government is, practically speaking, precluded from making grants of Crown lands over about 20,000 square miles of country; nobody cares to purchase and clear land or prospect for minerals; millions of feet of lumber have been cut from off Crown lands without the payment of one farthing, and the rivers are persistently barred and the salmon fisheries destroyed. There is, in fact, a state of things existing in Newfoundland which finds no parallel in any civilised country in the world, and which is unknown in any other colony of Great Britain. In the midst of a self-governing community a population exists owning no allegiance to anyone, liable to no laws, practically speaking subject to no Government of any kind. It is an anomalous and not a very creditable state of things. Whether it can be remedied or not is altogether another matter, but if possible something should be done for our own credit and for the sake of our fellow-subjects in Newfoundland. Newfoundland has special claims upon us, for

though sentiment is generally out of place in politics, it cannot be forgotten that Newfoundland is England's first-born. That foggy little island, although perhaps somewhat of a rough diamond, is a valuable jewel, and is the first that was set in the imperial crown.

. . . . . .

"There will be changes, of course," said Willie Whisper; "there may be some now, for all I know. You will know all about them, for you will go back to civilisation. I shall not know, because I shall never go back—and it won't matter a bit! That is one of the advantages of living out of the world."

DAYS IN THE WOODS

TOWARDS August or September, any man who has once been in the woods will begin to feel stirring within him a restless craving for the forest—an intense desire to escape from civilisation, a yearning to kick off his boots, and with them all the restraints, social and material, of ordinary life, and to revel once again in the luxury of moccasins, loose garments, absolute freedom of mind and body, and a complete escape from all the petty moral bondages and physical bandages of society. To a man who has once tasted of the woods, the instinct to return thither is as strong as that of the salmon to seek the sea.

Suppose then that you have determined upon such a return and, with me, have arrived at the last house, where Indians and canoes are waiting for us. Old John Williams, the Indian, beaming with smiles, shakes hands, and says, "My soul and body, sir, I am glad to see you back again in New Brunswick.

How have you been, sir? Pretty smart, I hope." "Oh, first-rate, thank you, John; and how are you, and how did you get through the winter, and how is the farm getting on?" "Pretty well, sir. I killed a fine fat cow moose last December, that kept me in meat most all winter; farm is getting on splendid. I was just cutting my oats when I got your telegram, and dropped the scythe right there in the swarth, and left. I hear there's a sight of folks going in the woods this fall; more callers than moose, I guess." And so, after a little conversation with the other Indians, in the course of which we discover that though they have been there three days, they have never thought of patching up the canoes, and have left the baking-powder or frying-pan or some equally essential article behind, we enter the settler's house, and so to supper and bed.

The first day is not pleasant. The canoes have to be carted ten miles to the head of the stream we propose descending, and the hay wagon wants mending, or the oxen have gone astray. Patience and perseverance, however, overcome all these and similar difficulties, and at last we are deposited on the margin of a tiny stream; the settler starts his patient, stolid oxen, over the scarcely per-

ceptible track, saying, "Well, good day, gents; I hope you will make out all right," and we are left alone in the forest.

The first thing to be done is to make a little fire, and then with a hot brand melt the gum on the seams of the canoes where it may have been cracked by the jolting of the wagon, and to patch up with resin and pieces of calico, brought for the purpose, any holes in the bark. An Indian ascertains that his canoe is watertight by the simple method of applying his lips to every seam that appears leaky, and seeing whether the air sucks through. This ceremony he religiously performs every morning before launching his canoe, and every evening when he takes her out of the water. It looks as though he were embracing her with much affection, and it sounds like it; but in reality it must be an osculatory process more useful than agreeable, for a canoe, like an Indian squaw, though excellent for carrying burdens, cannot be particularly pleasant to kiss. Our canoes having successfully passed through this ordeal, they are carefully placed upon the water, brush is cut and laid along the bottom, the baggage carefully stowed, and away we start at last, three canoes with a white man in the bow and a red

man in the the stern of each. Civilisation, with all its worries, anxieties, disappointments, heat, dust, restraint, luxury, and discomfort, is left behind; before us are the grand old woods, the open barrens, stream, lake, and river—perfect freedom, lovely cool autumnal weather, three weeks' provisions, plenty of ammunition, the forest and the stream to supply food, and the fishing-rod and rifle with which to procure it.

Down we go, very slowly and carefully, wading half the time, lifting stones out of the way, tenderly lifting the canoes over shallows, for the stream scarcely trickles over its pebbly bed. After a while the water deepens and becomes still. We take to the paddles and make rapid progress.

"Guess there's a dam pretty handy," says John, and so it turns out to be, for after a mile of dead water we are brought up by a beaver-dam, showing an almost dry river-bed below it. Canoes are drawn up and the dam is demolished in a few minutes, giving a couple of nights' hard labour to the industrious families whose houses we had passed a little way above the dam. Then we have to wait for half an hour to give the water a start of us, and then off again, poling, wading, paddling

down the stream, until the sinking sun indicates time to camp.

In a few minutes—for all hands are used to the work—canoes are unladen, two tents pitched, soft beds of fir-tops spread evenly within them, wood cut, and bright fires burning, more for cheerfulness than warmth. A box of hard bread is opened, tea brewed, and ham set frizzling in the pan. Tea is a great thing in the woods. Indians are very fond of it; their plan is to put as much tea as they can get hold of into a kettle, and boil it until it is nearly strong enough to stand a spoon upright in. Of this bitter decoction they drink enormous quantities for supper, and immediately fall fast asleep, having nothing about them that answers to civilised nerves.

Sunrise finds us up; breakfast is soon over, tents are struck, canoes loaded, and we are on our way down the deepening stream. It is a river now, with lots of trout in the shallows, and salmon in the deep pools. About noon we turn sharp off to the eastward up a little brawling brook, forcing our way with some difficulty up its shallow rapids till it gets too dry, and we are compelled to go ashore and to "carry" over to the lake whither we are bound. One of us stops behind to make a

fire, boil the kettle, and prepare the dinner, while the Indians swing each a canoe on to his shoulders and start through the woods. In three trips everything is carried across, and we embark again upon a lovely lake.

The "carry" was not long, only about half a mile, and there was a good blazed trail, so that it was a comparatively easy job; but under the most favourable circumstances this *portaging*, or *carrying*, is very hard work. It is hard enough to have to lift eighty or one hundred pounds on your back. It is worse when you have to carry the burden half a mile, and get back as quickly as you can for another load; and when you have to crawl under fallen limbs, climb over prostrate logs, balance yourself on slippery tree-trunks, flounder through bogs, get tangled up in alder swamps, force yourself through branches which slap you viciously in the face, with a big load on your back, a hot sun overhead, and several mosquitoes on your nose. I know of nothing more calculated to cause an eruption of bad language, a considerable gain in animal heat, and a corresponding loss of temper. But it has to be done, and the best way is to take it coolly, and, if you cannot do that, to take it as coolly as you can.

Out on the lake it was blowing a gale, and right against us. We had to kneel in the bottom of the canoes, instead of sitting on the thwarts, and vigorously ply our paddles. The heavily laden craft plunged into the waves, shipping water at every jump, and sending the spray flying into our faces. Sometimes we would make good way, and then, in a squall, we would not gain an inch, and be almost driven on shore; but after much labour we gained the shelter of a projecting point, and late in the evening reached our destination, and drew up our canoes for the last time.

While others make camp, old John wanders off with his head stooped, and eyes fixed on the ground, according to his custom. The old man always looks as if he had lost something and was searching for it. Indeed, this is very often the case. I remember, after watching him one day prying and wandering about an old lumber camp, asking him what on earth he was doing. "Oh, nothing, sir," he answered; "I hid a clay pipe here, somewhere—let me see, about thirty-five years ago, and I was looking for it." After dark he comes quietly in, sits down by the fire and lights his pipe, and, after smoking a little while, observes, "Moose been here, sir, not long ago.

I saw fresh tracks, a cow and a calf close handy just around that little point of woods." Another silence, and then he looks up with a smile of the most indescribable cunning and satisfaction, and adds, "I think, mebbe, get a moose pretty soon if we have a fine night." "Well, I hope so, John," say I. "Yes, sir, I see where he rub his horn, sir; you know the little meadow just across the hardwood ridge? why, where we saw the big cariboo track three years ago. He's been fighting the bushes there. My soul and body, a big bull, sir, great works, tracks seven inches long." And so we fall to talking about former hunting excursions till bedtime, or rather sleepy time, comes, and we curl up in our blankets, full of hopes for the future, which may or may not be disappointed.

Moose-calling commences about the 1st of September and ends about the 15th of October. A full moon occurring between the middle and end of September is the best of all times. The best plan in calling is to fix upon a permanent camp and make little expeditions of two or three days' duration from it, returning to rest and get fresh supplies. Then you enjoy the true luxury of hunting. Then you feel really and thoroughly independent and free. The Indian carries your

blanket, your coat, a little tea, sugar, and bread, a kettle, and two tin pannikins. The hunter has enough to do to carry himself, his rifle, ammunition, a small axe, hunting-knife, and a pair of field-glasses. Thus accoutred, clad in a flannel shirt and home-spun continuations, moose-hide moccasins on your feet, your trousers tucked into woollen socks, your arms unencumbered with that useless article, a coat, you plunge into the woods, the sun your guide in clear weather, your pocket-compass if it is cloudy, the beasts and birds and fishes your companions; and wander through the woods at will, sleeping where the fancy seizes you, "calling" if the nights are calm, or still hunting on a windy day. Calling is the most fascinating, disappointing, exciting of all sports. You may be lucky at once and kill your moose the first night you go out, perhaps at the very first call you make. You may be weeks and weeks, perhaps the whole calling season, without getting a shot. Moose-calling is simple enough in theory; in practice it is immensely difficult of application. It consists, as I explained the other night, in imitating the cry of the animal with a hollow cone made of birch bark, and endeavouring by this means to call up a moose near enough to get a shot at him by moonlight or

in the early morning. He will come straight up to you, within a few yards—walk right over you almost—answering, "speaking," as the Indians term it, as he comes along, if nothing happens to scare him; but that is a great *if*. So many unavoidable accidents occur. The great advantage of moose-calling is, that it takes one out in the woods during the most beautiful period of the whole year—when Nature, tired with the labour of spring and summer, puts on her holiday garments, and rests luxuriously before falling into the deep sleep of winter. The great heats are past, though the days are still warm and sunny; the nights are calm and peaceful, the mornings cool, the evenings so rich in colouring that they seem to dye the whole woodland with sunset hues, for the maple, oak, birch, and beech trees glow with a gorgeousness unknown to similar trees at home. If the day is windy, you can track the moose and cariboo, or perchance a bear, through the deep shady recesses of the forest. On a still day, you may steal noiselessly over the smooth surface of some lake, or along a quiet reach of still river water, fringed with alder, winding tortuously through natural meadows, or beneath a ridge crowned with birch and maples, whose feathery branches and

crimson leaves are so clearly reflected on a surface perfectly placid that you seem to be gliding over a forest of submerged trees. Or you may indulge to perfection in that most luxurious pastime—doing nothing. I know a lovely place for that, on a hunting-ground I used to frequent, a little island of woods about a quarter of a mile from camp, with a tall pine-tree in the middle, which was kind enough to arrange its branches in such a way that it was very easy to climb. Thither I would go on lazy days, when tired with hunting, with my gun and a book, and, leaning against its friendly trunk, read till I was tired of literature, and then climb up in the breezy branches and look out far and wide over the barrens on either side. Many a cariboo have I seen from thence, and shot him after an exciting stalk out on the plain.

Let us imagine a party of three men to burst out of the thick woods on to a little open space, or barren, hot and tired, about four o'clock on a fine October day. Before them lies a still deep reach of a little river, fringed on the near side with brown alders; on the opposite side lies a piled-up ragged heap of loose grey granite blocks, with one solitary dead pine-tree, stretching out its gaunt, bare, shrivelled limbs against the clear sky.

Just beyond is a little clump of pines, and all around a grey meadow, quite open for some fifty yards or so, then dotted with occasional unhappy-looking firs, sad and forlorn, with long tresses of grey moss hanging from their stunted limbs. The trees grow closer and closer together, and become more vigorous in appearance till they merge into the unbroken forest beyond. Supposing that I formed one of the party, I should immediately take measures to make myself comfortable for the night, for I am of a luxurious habit. I should set one Indian, say John Williams, to look for water, which he would find by scooping a hole in the moss with his hands, into which cavity a black and muddy liquid would presently flow, not inviting to look at, but in an hour's time it will have settled clear enough to drink—in the dark. I and the other Indian, say Noel Glode, would turn to and make camp. That is easily done when you know how—so is making a watch. You clear away a space beneath some tree, making it nice and level, and set up a shelter on whichever side you apprehend the wind will come from. You stick some poles or young fir-trees into the ground, prop them up with other trees, lash a pole horizontally along them, with a bit of string if you

have it, or the flexible root of a fir if you have not. Cut down a lot of pine branches, and thatch the framework with them till you have formed a little lean-to, which will keep off a good deal of wind and all the dew. Then you strew the ground thickly with fir-tops or bracken, gather a lot of dry wood in case you want to make a fire, and all is ready for the night.

In a scene very like that, many a year ago now, I spent the last two nights of the calling season. It was nearly sundown before our work was over, and, leaving Noel to finish camp, I sent John to a tree-top to look out, and sat down myself on a rock at a little distance to smoke the calumet of peace. These "barrens" are very melancholy at the decline of day, intensely sad, yet in their own way beautiful, full of delicate colouring. The grey, dead, tufted grass lies matted by the margin of the stream, over which brown alders droop, looking at their own images in the water, perfectly still, save when some otter, beaver, or musk-rat plunges sullenly in and disturbs it for a moment. The ground, carpeted with cariboo moss, white as ivory but with purple roots, is smooth, save for a few detached rugged masses of granite covered with grey or black lichens. An occasional dwarfed

pine, encumbered with hanging festoons of moss, strives to grow in the wet soil; and on drier spots, two or three tall, naked, dead firs, that have been burned in some bygone fire, look pale, like ghosts of trees in the deepening twilight.

Beyond all, the forest rises, gloomy, black, mysterious. Nature looks sad, worn-out, dying; as though lamenting the ancient days and the inevitable approach of the white man's axe. Well in harmony with her melancholy mood are the birds and beasts that roam those solitudes, and haunt the woods and streams. The hooting owl, the loon or great northern diver, that startles the night with its unearthly scream, are weird uncanny creatures; the cariboo or reindeer, which was contemporary with many extinct animals on this globe—mammoths, cave bears, and others—and which has seen curious sights among aboriginal men, has a strange look as if belonging to some older world and some other time, with his fantastic antlers and great white mane; and so, too, has the huge ungainly moose, that shares with him the forest and the swamps.

I had not, however, much time to indulge in reverie, for scarcely had I sat down before I heard old John call gently like a moose to attract my

attention. Now it must be borne in mind that when hunting you never call to anyone like a human being, for to do so might scare away game; but you grunt like a moose, or, if you prefer it, hoot like an owl, or make any other sound emitted by one of the brute creation. I crept up quickly, and in obedience to John's whisper gave him the moose-caller, and, following the direction of his eyes, saw a small bull moose slowly crossing the barren some four or five hundred yards to our left. At the first sound from John's lips, the moose stopped dead short, and looked round, then moved a few steps towards us and stopped again. We watched him for some time. He was evidently timid, and it seemed doubtful whether he would come up; and, as it was growing dark, Noel and I started to try and steal round the edge of the wood in order to cut him off before he could get into the timber and cross our tracks. We had not gone a hundred yards before we heard another bull coming up from a different direction through the forest, answering John's call. We could tell by the sound that he was a large one, and that he was coming up rapidly. The small bull heard him also, and stopped. We were now, of a truth, in a dilemma. There was a moose in

sight of us, but it was ten to one that he would smell our tracks and get scared before we could reach him. There was a larger moose coming through the woods, but where he would emerge it was impossible to say; and, to make matters worse, it was rapidly getting dark. The difficulty was soon settled, for the smaller moose moved on again towards the woods, crossed our track, snuffed us, and started off across the barren at a trot; so we had to turn our attention to the larger one. He came on boldly; we could hear him call two or three times in succession, and then stop dead silent for a few minutes to listen, and then on again, speaking. We planted ourselves right in his way, just on the edge of the woods, and, crouching close to the ground, waited for him. Presently we heard his hoarse voice close to us, and the crackling of the bushes as he passed through them; then silence fell again, and we heard nothing but the thumping of our hearts; another advance, and he stopped once more, within apparently about fifty yards of us. After a long, almost insupportable pause, he came on again; we could hear his footsteps, we could hear the grass rustling, we could hear him breathing, we could see the bushes shaking, but we could not make out even

the faintest outline of him in the dark. Again he stopped, and our hearts seemed to stand still also with expectation ; another step must have brought him out almost within reach of me, when suddenly there was a tremendous crash ! He had smelt us, and was off with a cracking of dead limbs, rattling of horns, smashing of branches, which made the woods resound again. Disappointed we were, but not unhappy, for the first duty of the hunter is to drill himself into that peculiar frame of mind which enables a man to exult when he is successful, and to accept ill-luck and defeat without giving way to despondency.

It was by this time pitch dark, and there was no use therefore in calling any more. So in a few minutes we were seated round a bright cheerful little fire ; the kettle was boiled, and we consoled ourselves with what story-books call "a frugal meal" of bread and tea, and then reclining on our beds of bracken, with our backs to the fire, smoked and chatted till sleep began to weigh our eyelids down. I have observed that in most accounts of travel and hunting adventure people are represented as lying with their feet to the fire. That is a great blunder. Always keep your shoulders and back warm, and you will be warm

all over. If there are a number of people round one fire, and it is necessary to lie stretched out like the spokes of a wheel, with the fire representing the axle, it is advisable, no doubt, to lie with your head outwards, for it is better to toast your heels than to roast your head; but if there is room to lie lengthways, always do so, and keep your back to the fire. Of course we talked about the moose we had so nearly killed. "My soul and body, sir," says John, "never see such luck in all my life; most as bad as we had two years ago when we was camped away down east by the head of Martin's River. You remember, sir, the night we saw the little fire in the woods close by, when there was no one there to make it. Very curious that was; can't make that out at all. What was it, do you think?"

"Well, John," I said, "I suppose it must have been a piece of dead wood shining."

"Yes, sir; but it did not look like that; most too red and flickering for dead wood."

"Perhaps ghosts making a fire, John," said I.

"Yes, sir, mebbe; some of our people believes in ghosts, sir; very foolish people, some Indians."

"Don't you, John?"

"Oh no, sir; I never seed no ghosts. I have

seen and heard some curious things, though. I was hunting once with two gentlemen near Rocky River—you know the place well, sir. We were all sitting in the camp; winter time, sir; pretty late, about bedtime. The gentlemen were drinking their grog, and we was smoking and talking, when we heard someone walking, coming up to the camp. 'Holloa!' says one of the gentlemen, 'who can this be at this time of night?' Well, sir, we stopped talking, and we all heard the man walk up to the door. My soul, sir, we could hear his moccasins crunching on the hard dry snow quite plain. He walked up to the door, but did not open it, did not speak, did not knock. So, after a little, one of us looked out—*nobody there;* nobody there at all, sir. Next morning there was not a track on the snow—not a track—and no snow fell in the night. Well, sir, we stayed there a fortnight, and most every night we would hear a man in moccasins walk up to the door and stop; and if we looked there was no one there, and he left no tracks in the snow. What was it, do you think, sir?"

"Don't know, John, I am sure," I said, "unless it was some strange effect of wind in the trees."

"Well, sir, I seed a curious thing once. I was

hunting with a gentleman—from the old country, I think he was—my word, sir, a long time ago, mebbe thirty years or more. My soul and body, sir, what a sight of moose there was in the woods in those days! and the cariboo run in great herds then; all failing now, sir, all failing. We were following cariboo, right fresh tracks in the snow; we were keeping a sharp look-out, expecting to view them every minute, when I looked up and saw a man standing right between us and where the cariboo had gone. He was not more than two hundred yards off—I could see him quite plain. He had on a cloth cap and a green blanket-coat with a belt round the middle—not a leather belt like we use, sir, but a woollen one like what the Frenchmen uses in Canada. There was braid down the seams of his coat and round the cuffs. I could see the braid quite plain. He had no gun, nor axe, nor nothing in his hands, but just stood there with his hand on his hip, that way, right in the path, doing nothing. 'Our hunting all over, sir,' I said to the gentleman. 'We may as well go home.' 'Why, what is the matter, John?' says he. 'Why, look at the man there right in the track; he's scared our cariboo, I guess.' Well, sir, he was very mad, the gentleman was,

and was for turning right round and going home; but I wanted to go up and speak to the man. He stood there all the time—never moved. I kind of bowed, nodded my head to him, and he kind of nodded his head, bowed just the same way to me. Well, I started to go up to him, when up rose a great fat cow moose between him and me. 'Look at the moose, Captain!' I said. 'Shoot her!' 'Good heavens, John!' he says, 'if I do, I shall shoot the man too!' 'No, no, sir, never mind,' I cried, 'fire at the moose.' Well, sir, he up with the gun, fired, and downed the moose. She just ran a few yards, pitched forward, and fell dead. When the smoke cleared off, the man was gone; could not see him nowheres. 'My soul and body! what's become of the man, Captain?' I says. 'Dunno, John; perhaps he is down too,' says he. 'Well, sir,' says I, 'you stop here, and I will go and look; mebbe he is dead, mebbe not quite dead yet.' Well, I went up to the place, and there was nothing there—nothing but a little pine-tree, no man at all. I went all round, sir—no tracks, no sign of a man anywhere on the snow. What was it, do you think, sir, we saw?"

"Well, John," I replied, "I think that was a curious instance of refraction." "Oh, mebbe,"

says John; "guess I will take a little nap now—moon get up by and by;" and in another instant he was fast asleep. Indians have a wonderful faculty for going to sleep. They seem to shut themselves up at will, with a snap like slamming down the lid of a box with a spring, and are fast asleep in a second; and there they will lie, snoring and shivering with cold until you touch or call them, and then they are wide awake in an instant, as if they pressed some knob concealed in their internal mechanism, and flew suddenly open again.

I remember seeing a curious instance of refraction once myself. We were paddling home one evening, old John and I, along a still deep reach of dead water, gliding dreamily over a surface literally as smooth as a polished mirror. It was evening, and the sun was only just clear of the tree-tops on the western side. Happening to look up, I saw on the eastern side a shadow, a stooping form, glide across the trees about twenty or thirty feet from the ground and disappear. It looked very ghost-like, and for an instant it startled me. In a few seconds it reappeared, and, the trees growing thicker together and affording a better background, I saw the shadows plainly—two

figures in a canoe gliding along in the air, the shadows of John and myself, cast up at an obtuse angle from the surface of the water by the almost level rays of the setting sun.

The Indians soon were comfortably sleeping, and had wandered off into the land of dreams; but I, my nature being vitiated by many years of civilisation, could not so easily yield to the wooing of the drowsy god. For some time I lay awake, blinking lazily at the fire, watching flickering forms and fading faces in the glowing embers, speculating idly on the fortunes of the Red Indian race, and on the destinies of the vast continent around me—in memory revisiting many lovely scenes, and going over again in thought the hunting adventures and canoeing voyages of former days. The palmy days of canoeing are past and gone. Time was when fleets of large birch-bark canoes, capable of carrying some tons weight, navigated the waters of the St. Lawrence, of the Ottawa, and of the great lakes to the mouths of different rivers on the north shore of Lake Superior, where they are met by smaller canoes arriving from the shores of the Frozen Ocean, from unnamed lakes and unknown rivers, from unexplored regions, from countries inhabited by wild animals and fur-

bearing beasts—districts as large as European countries lying unnoticed in the vast territories of British North America.

All that is changed, though a great trade is still carried on by means of these primitive but most useful and graceful boats. Steamers ply upon the lakes and ascend the rivers, the country is being rapidly opened up, wrested from wild nature, and turned into a habitation fit for civilised man. One of the pleasantest canoe voyages I ever made was from Fort William, at the mouth of the Kaministiquoya, to Fort Garry, situated close to the junction of the Assineboin with the Red River of the North, and near to the shores of Lake Winnipeg. That was but a few years ago; but how all that country has changed since then! Winnipeg was a very small place then, scarcely known to the outside world. I remember I met a family in the steamer on Lake Superior, a lady and gentleman and their children, and when in the course of the conversation it came out that they were going to Winnipeg, I felt almost as much astonished as if they had told me they were on their way to spend the summer at their country residence at the North Pole. Now Winnipeg has become a flourishing town. The trading post of

Fort Garry is submerged and overwhelmed by a mass of civilisation; Manitoba is a province, and a growing and prosperous one. One of the finest, if not the very finest, agricultural districts in the world has been opened up to man. It is a district capable of producing the choicest wheat in practically limitless quantities. It is blessed with many advantages, but it also labours under certain disadvantages which must not be overlooked. Three great rivers flow into Lake Winnipeg—the Red River, the Saskatchewan, and the Winnipeg. The latter river is magnificent so far as scenery is concerned, but it is full of dangerous rapids, and will never be of any great commercial value to the country. The Red River is navigable for steamers for a distance of six hundred miles. One hundred and eighty-five miles only of its course lie in British territory; the remainder of the distance it traverses the state of Minnesota. The land it drains is rich alluvial prairie. At a distance of forty miles from its mouth it receives the waters of the Assineboin, a river flowing entirely through British territory; it is said to be navigable for three hundred miles. The two Saskatchewans rise in the Rocky Mountains about thirty miles apart, and pursue slightly diverging courses, till they

become separated by a distance of nearly three hundred miles. They then gradually converge again until they join together at a distance of about eight hundred miles from their head-waters, and then after a united course of nearly three hundred miles, discharge their mingled waters into Lake Winnipeg. With the exception of the last few miles of their course, these rivers are navigable for steamers, the one—that is, the North Saskatchewan—for one thousand, and the South branch for eight hundred miles. Between them, and on each side of them, lies the fertile belt, a virgin soil of any depth. No forests encumber the land. The farmer has but to turn up the soil lying ready waiting for the seed. It is a mistake to suppose that all this great Western country is good land; that is nonsense. There is good and there is bad; but it is true that there is little bad and much good. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of acres of the best land in the world are lying there idle, waiting for man. From the southern boundary of the United States to the South Saskatchewan, there is no such fertile tract as this. It is like a huge oasis lying between the parched pastures of the south and the frozen solitudes of the icy north. Nor is the wheat-

growing country confined to the great tract that drains into Lake Winnipeg. If anyone will look at the isothermal line upon a map, he will find that it takes a tremendous sweep northward a little to the west of the centre of the continent, and includes the great Peace River valley, a portion of the Athabaska district, and of the valley of the Mackenzie River. The day will come when wheat will be grown in that country within a very few degrees of the Arctic Circle. Nature has been bountiful to these north-western provinces. The warm breezes from the west waft them prosperity, but it is their northern position which proves the only drawback to them. The chief difficulty is a difficulty of communication. The value of land, in a country where land is plentiful and cheap, depends upon the cost of transporting the produce of the soil to market. The great wheat-producing region I have described is at present tapped by a line of railway running south through the United States. That cannot be called a natural, or altogether a proper outlet. It is not worth while anticipating any serious difficulty between the United States and the British Empire. We may for practical purposes dismiss that contingency from our calculations, as one most unlikely to

occur. It is becoming more and more improbable every year as the two nations learn to understand and appreciate each other better. But, at the same time, it is highly inexpedient that the produce of any portion of the British Empire should, in seeking its natural market in other portions of the same Empire, be compelled to pass through the territories of another nation. When that produce consists of the first necessary of life, the inexpediency is increased.

Another line of railway has now been constructed for the carriage of grain from Manitoba to the north shore of Lake Superior, whence it can be transported by ships or barges over the broad waters of the great lakes, and down the majestic current of the St. Lawrence to the ocean. But on this line also there is a difficulty, an obstruction. The waters of that inland sea, Lake Superior, pour themselves into Lake Huron in a boiling, tumultuous flood down the rapid known as the Sault St. Mary. This rapid is quite impassable, and ships go round it through a canal which is in the State of Michigan. This is a disadvantage to the route, but not a very great one, for the canal is only a few miles in length. A convention, I believe, exists between the Canadian and United

States Governments, regulating the rates to be charged upon it, and, moreover, there is no engineering difficulty whatever in constructing a canal on the British side of the river. It is true that the canal is closed by ice during the winter months, but free navigation exists during the greater part of the year, and the St. Lawrence is also closed during the winter. Anyone looking at a map of British North America will say at once, "But neither of these routes is the natural geographical road in and out of this country. The Hudson's Bay Company long ago discovered and made use of the proper outlet, and the grain of thousands and thousands of fertile acres will find its way to London by the same means, and over the same roads, as the skins of wild animals have been brought to that market." I wish I could think that was true. Then indeed would Manitoba and the great North-West be the most favoured country in the world—the earthly paradise of the agriculturist.

Hudson's Bay and the river flowing into it from Lake Winnipeg form the natural gateway to the great North-West, and Lake Winnipeg is the natural centre of distribution and collection for a large portion of that vast region. But there is an

icy bolt drawn across the door, barring the way. Lake Winnipeg is a huge lake, an inland sea of some three hundred miles in length and fifty or sixty in breadth. It receives the drainage of the fertile belt through navigable rivers, and it sends off that drainage towards the North through a large river—the Nelson—which pours its waters into Hudson's Bay. The Nelson is, in fact, the continuation of the Saskatchewan. Lake Winnipeg is in the very centre of the continent. If ocean steamers could penetrate to that lake, it would be like despatching a steamer direct from the port of London to the grain elevators of Chicago. It would be even better, for a vessel loading in Lake Winnipeg could take in her grain at the mouth of rivers penetrating to the very base of the Rocky Mountains, navigable for a thousand miles through the richest land of the continent. Cannot this magnificent water system be utilised ? I fear not. There are two obstacles which I am afraid will prove insurmountable. These are, the navigation of Hudson's Straits, and the navigation of the Nelson. Of Hudson's Bay and Straits we can speak with some confidence, for the Hudson's Bay Company have for a long period sent two, and occasionally three, ships every year to their two

principal posts on Hudson's Bay—namely, Moose Factory, situated at the head of James Bay, the most southern indentation of Hudson's Bay, and York Factory, which is placed close to the mouth of the Nelson River.

Hudson's Bay is open for four or five months in the year. But Hudson's Straits are not, and there is little comfort in having open water inside in the Bay when you cannot reach it, and it is a poor consolation to know that the warm ocean is close to you outside when you cannot get out. There are years in which the straits are not open for more than two or three weeks. Ships have occasionally failed to force a passage through the Straits, and ships have been detained in the Bay all the summer, unable to work their way out.

The average duration of open navigation of the Straits is about five or six weeks in the year; you cannot depend upon more than that, though they may be open for nearly as many months. Of course the substitution of steam vessels for sailing ships would make considerable difference; but, even supposing steamers adapted to the purpose to be used, it must, I fear, be conceded that the navigation would be precarious, and the open season short. Moreover, the navigation is difficult

and peculiar at the best of times, and it is doubtful whether ordinary steam vessels could be used, and problematical whether a trade could possibly be made to pay, requiring especially constructed ships, which would be idle for eight or ten months of the year. So much for the Straits—now as to the rivers.

Formerly the Hudson's Bay Company transported all the peltry—that is, furs and skins—collected over a vast area, to Lake Winnipeg. Over that lake it was taken in large boats to Norway House, at the head of the Nelson, and down that river to York Factory at the mouth of it. And all supplies, all the necessaries and all the luxuries of life, all that white men and Indians required, were transported up the Nelson to Norway House, thence carried to various parts of the lake, and then disseminated through the land by boats, canoes, and dog sleighs.

Some time ago the Company abandoned the Nelson, adopted Hayes River, and have used that route ever since. Hayes River is not an outlet of Lake Winnipeg. Properly speaking, it is a small river flowing into Hudson's Bay close to the mouth of the Nelson. But the name, Hayes River, is generally given to that series of lakes

and streams which constitutes the route for canoe and boat navigation between Norway House on Lake Winnipeg and York Factory on the sea. In referring to the line of water communication at present in use between Lake Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay, I shall therefore call it Hayes River. The Hudson's Bay Company use large boats capable of carrying ten tons burden; so I assume that Hayes River is the better river of the two, and the more easily navigated by vessels of any size.

Hayes River has a course of somewhere about three hundred miles in length. In the course of that three hundred miles there are twenty or thirty portages. That is to say, obstructions occur at average intervals of ten or fifteen miles, so serious as to necessitate the immense labour of dragging over land boats capable of carrying ten tons, and the merchandise within them. That does not sound like a waterway that could be navigated by steamers of any kind—as a matter of fact, Hayes River is a mere boat route. There remains, then, the great Nelson River, the outlet of Lake Winnipeg. The Nelson or Saskatchewan is a first-class river in point of size and volume of water, but it is not navigable. Although the average depth of water for about ninety miles is said to be twenty feet, yet it is

stated that there is only ten feet of water at the head of the tideway; a fact which of course entirely precludes ocean steamers from ascending the river. For vessels drawing less than ten feet it is navigable for about a hundred miles; but at that distance from the sea there is a rapid or fall that entirely puts a stop to navigation, and renders it impossible for vessels of light draught to descend the river from the lake to the sea.

I do not suppose that either the Nelson or Hayes River has ever been thoroughly and accurately surveyed, sounded, or reported on by engineers with a view to future navigation; and so wonderful is the way in which man wars against nature by means of engineering skill, that I should be sorry to assert that this route is now, and always will remain, impracticable. But I know that it presents great, and I fear it presents insuperable, difficulties. It is certain that the Nelson, a river which, as far as the volume of water discharged by it is concerned, ought to be navigable for large ships, is rendered useless and impassable by obstructions which must be of a serious nature, seeing that the Hudson's Bay Company prefer Hayes River to it. Hayes River is merely a boat route, and not even a good one, for it contains, as I have before stated,

twenty or thirty portages in some three hundred miles. The fact, therefore, that it is better for large boats than the Nelson, does not lead one to form a very favourable estimate of the latter river.

Even without this direct communication by sea with Europe, Manitoba and the western fertile tract must become one of the most prosperous regions of the earth; and I think it affords a better opening for farming industry at the present time than any other district on the globe. If this route proved practicable, the prosperity of the country would be enormously increased; and it is to be sincerely hoped that the sanguine views of some writers on the subject may not prove fallacious. But until they are demonstrated to be correct, it would be unwise to attach too much importance to them. Disappointed immigrants form but a dejected and heart-broken population, and the strength of a young country was never healthily fostered by delusive hopes, mistaken statements, or thoughtless exaggeration.

I have alluded to this vast fertile region only in connection with the advantages it offers to the grower of wheat, but it must not on that account be supposed that it is unfitted in any way for the raising of stock. On the contrary, it is a vast

natural pasture-land—the true home and breeding ground of the American bison, commonly called the buffalo. Formerly a vast herd of buffalo, numbering many millions, wandered through the continent, their range extending from as high as 60° north down to the southern parts of Texas. In winter they moved towards the south, migrating again northward with summer-time.

This vast herd is now entirely broken up, and buffalo are disappearing out of the land. All the Indians on the plains subsist by means of them, living on their flesh, and making houses of their skins. Besides the thousands killed by Indians for food and robes, incredible numbers are slain every year by white hunters for the hides and horns. Owing to this indiscriminate slaughter, and to the fact that their pastures are cut by railways and intrusive settlements, the herd has become permanently divided into three. One band ranges in British territory about the Saskatchewan, west of Red River settlement; the second over the middle western Territories about the Platte and Republican Rivers; while the third, or southern herd, roams through Texas and the neighbouring States. As these the indigenous cattle of the country disappear, their place is to a

certain extent taken by the cattle originally imported from Europe. The shaggy-headed, short-horned bison passes from the scene, and with it the painted whooping savage, naked himself, and on a naked horse pursuing his natural prey with bow or spear; and in their place come herds of long-horned, savage-tempered, Spanish cattle, tended and driven by men wild to look at, strange of speech, and picturesque in garment, but white men and very different beings from the Indian hunters that came before them. Though Texas may be called the home of the Spanish cattle, and though vast unnumbered herds pasture on its luxuriant grasses, yet States lying further to the north are more suitable for cattle-breeding purposes. A mountainous country, affording, as it does, shelter in winter and some variety of temperature, is better adapted for cattle than the plains, which are either parched by the summer's sun, or covered with the snows of winter.

On the great plains extending west from Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains, the snow does not lie so deep as it does in districts within the same degrees of latitude, but further to the south, and consequently that country is well adapted by nature for stock-raising. But until means of cheap

transportation are provided, it cannot compete with other and less naturally favoured regions; it cannot hope to vie with Colorado, Wyoming, and the other States and Territories that include the foot-hills and fertile plains, packs, and valleys that lie within the eastern ranges of the Rocky Mountains.

So, while the Indians slept, I strayed in thought over hunting-grounds of the past, and marvelled at the changes that had taken place and the greater changes yet to come, till my musings were interrupted by old John, who awoke, sat up, shook his long hair out of his eyes, pulled his old black clay pipe out of his belt, placed a glowing ember in the bowl, and commenced smoking, with that expressive sound, half sigh, half suck, that tells of perfect satisfaction. "Why, old man, what is the matter," I said; "have you been dreaming?" "Yes, sir, I dreamed very hard, very hard indeed, very good dream too; see moose soon, I know—big one too. I see a big ship, with a big hull all black, oh black as pitch. I had a job to get on board, but I *did* get on board. It is all right, you'll get one pretty soon. My shoulders and legs ache awful bad too, sir. I shall be carrying a heavy load of meat soon, I know." It is a

curious fact that the strange conceit in "Alice through the Looking-glass," where effects are made to precede their causes, and the Queen cries before she has pricked her finger, is actually believed in and recognised as a law of nature by many people. Indians and half-breeds are usually very shy of mentioning their superstitions, for they hate ridicule. If they do speak of them, they affect to laugh at them themselves. Time and again I have heard Indians declare as a joke that they could feel the muscles of their backs ache where the withy rope cuts into them by which they carry a load of moose meat, and declare that it was a sure sign that a moose was shortly to die. But though they affected to laugh, they in their hearts believed thoroughly all they said.

"Well, John," I said, "I hope your dream will come true; but, talking of dreams, what was that story you began to tell me the other day about the bullets?"

"Oh yes, sir, that was a very curious dream, that was; many gentlemen won't believe that story, but it's true though. I was hunting with a gentleman long ago—in the winter time it was—and as we left the camp after breakfast, he laughed, and asked me what kind of dreams I had in the

night. He wanted to know whether we should have any luck, you know, sir. He was a very funny gentleman; he used always to tell the cook at night, 'You give John plenty fat pork for supper, make him dream good.' Well, sir, I told him I had a very curious dream. I thought he fired both barrels at a cariboo, and that I caught both the bullets in my hand and gave them to him. Well, he laughed at that, and said it could not be true, and that I could not dream good anyhow. But I thought to myself, we'll see. So we hunted all day, and in the afternoon came upon a large herd of cariboo out on a lake. We crept up behind some little bushes to within sixty or eighty yards, and then I told the gentleman to put on a fresh cap—it was in the old days of muzzle loaders, you know, sir—and shoot, for I could not get him any nearer. Well, sir, he took a long aim, and fired. The cariboos were all lying down on the ice, you know, sir, and they just jumped up and stood all bunched up together, looking about them. 'Fire again, sir,' I said, and he took another steady aim, and fired. Nothing hit, nothing down, away the cariboo went, tails up, not a sign of a wounded one among them. Every now and then they would stop and turn round to

see what had scared them, and then off again in a minute. Oh! we might have got plenty more shots, if we had had a rifle like what you have now, sir, but it took some time to load a rifle in those days, especially in winter time, when a man can scarcely take his fingers out of his mits—and so they got clean away. The gentleman was terribly mad, threw his rifle down, and swore he would never use it again. It seemed to me the shots sounded kind of curious somehow, and I thought I would just go and see where the bullets went to. I had not gone twenty yards, when I found the place where one of them had struck the snow. A little further on I found where it had struck again, and then where it had struck a third time a little further on still. And so it went on hopping in the snow, the jumps getting shorter and shorter each time, and the trail circling round as it went, till finally the track ran along in the snow for a few feet and stopped. And there I found the bullet, picked it up, and put it in my pocket. Well, having got one, I thought I would go and trail the other bullet: I soon found where that had struck. It acted just like the first one, and I picked it up also. So I went back to the gentleman, and as he was loading the gun, I said, kind of indifferent like,

'Just see if those bullets fit your gun, Captain.' 'Yes, John,' he says, 'and suppose they do, what of that?' 'Why, Captain,' says I, 'those are your bullets, and I picked them up. Now what do you say about my dream?' Well, he would not believe me until I showed him the marks in the snow, and he found that the bullets fitted his rifle exactly, and then he had to. Lord, sir, I have heard him tell that story scores of times, and he would get quite angry when people would not believe it."

So we talked and yarned till I grew sleepy and dozed off, somewhat against my will, for the nights are too lovely to waste in sleep. Nothing can exceed the beauty of these northern nights, a beauty so calm, grand, majestic, almost awful in its majesty, that there exists not a man, I believe, on the face of this earth with a spirit so dulled, or a mind so harassed, that he could withstand its peace-giving power. By day his troubles may be too heavy for him, but the night is more potent than any drug, than any excitement, to steep the soul in forgetfulness. You cannot "bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades," nor resist the soothing touch of mother Nature, when she reveals herself in the calm watches of the night, and her

presence filters through all the worldly coverings of care, down to the naked soul of man. It is a wonderful and strange experience to lie out under the stars in the solemn, silent darkness of the forest, to watch the constellations rise and set, to lie there gazing up through the branches of the grand old trees, which have seen another race dwell beneath their boughs and pass away, whose age makes the little fretful life of man seem insignificantly small; gazing up at planet after planet, sun beyond sun, into the profundity of space, till this tiny speck in the universe, this little earth, with all its discontent and discord, its wrangling races, its murmuring millions of men, dwindles into nothing, and the mind looks out so far beyond, that it falls back stunned with the vastness of the vision which looms overwhelmingly before it.

The earth sleeps. A silence that can be felt has fallen over the woods. The stars begin to fade. A softer and stronger light wells up and flows over the scene as the broad moon slowly floats above the tree-tops, shining white upon the birch trees, throwing into black shadow the sombre pines, dimly lighting up the barren, and revealing grotesque ghost-like forms of stunted fir and grey

rock. The tree trunks stand out distinct in the lessening gloom; the dark pine boughs overhead seem to stoop caressingly towards you. Amid a stillness that is terrifying, man is not afraid. Surrounded by a majesty that is appalling, he shrinks not, nor is he dismayed. In a scene of utter loneliness he feels himself not to be alone. A sense of companionship, a sensation of satisfaction, creep over him. He feels at one with Nature, at rest in her strong protecting arms.

As soon as the moon was high enough to shed a good light, Noel and I walked down to a little point of woods jutting out into the barren to call. Putting the birch-bark caller to his lips, Noel imitated the long-drawn, wailing cry of the moose, and then we sat down wrapped in our blankets, patiently to listen and to wait. No answer, perfect stillness prevailed. Presently, with a strange, rapidly approaching rush, a gang of wild geese passed, clanging overhead, their strong pinions whirring in the still air. After pausing about half an hour Noel called again, and this time we heard a faint sound that made our hearts jump. We listened intently and heard it again. It was only an owl a long way off calling to its mate in the woods. After a while we heard a loon's

melancholy quavering scream on the lake, taken up by two or three other loons. "Something frightens the loons," whispers Noel to me. "Mebbe moose coming. I will try another call;" and again the cry of the moose rolled across the barren, and echoed back from the opposite wood. "Hark!" says Noel, "what's that? I hear him right across the wood there," and in truth we could just make out the faint call of a bull moose miles away. The sound got rapidly nearer, he was coming up quickly, when we heard a second moose advancing to meet him. They answered each other for a little while, and then they ceased speaking, and the forest relapsed into silence, so death-like that it was hard to believe that it ever had been or could be broken by any living thing. Nothing more was heard for a long time; not a sound vibrated through the frosty stillness of the air, till suddenly it was rudely broken by a crash like a dead tree falling in the forest, followed by a tremendous racket—sticks cracking, hoofs pawing the ground, horns thrashing against bushes.

There the moose fought at intervals for about two hours, when the noise ceased as suddenly as it began, and after a pause we heard one bull

coming straight across the barren to us, speaking as he came along.

The moose arrived within about fifty or sixty yards of us. We could dimly see him in the dark shadow of an island of trees. In another second he would have been out in the moonlight if we had left him alone, but Noel, in his anxiety to bring him up, called like a bull, and the moose, who had probably had enough of fighting for one night, turned right round and went back again across the barren. We did not try any more calling, but made up our fire and lay down till daylight.

The next night, or rather on the morning after, we called up two moose after sunrise, but failed from various causes in getting a shot, but on the day succeeding that I killed a very large bull. We had called without any answer all night, and were going home to the principal camp about ten in the day, when we heard a cow call. It was a dead calm, and the woods were very noisy, dry as tinder, and strewn with crisp, dead leaves, but we determined to try and creep up to her. I will not attempt to describe how we crept up pretty near, and waited, and listened patiently for hours, till we heard her again, and fixed the exact spot

where she was: how we crept and crawled, inch by inch, through bushes, and over dry leaves and brittle sticks, till we got within sight and easy shot of three moose—a big bull, a cow, and a two-year-old. Suffice it to say, that the big bull died; he paid the penalty. Female loquacity cost him his life. If his lovely but injudicious companion could have controlled her feminine disposition to talk, that family of moose would still have been roaming the woods, happy and united.

. . . . . .

"There are still many things which I should like to have told you," said Willie, "if there had been time; but by the smell of the air this spell will have broken before morning, and we shan't have another night of yarning. I should like to have given you one run with buffalo on the plains, and told you of a successful stalk up in the Colorado mountains that brought me the finest known specimen of the mountain sheep, and showed me grizzlies feeding on heaps of locusts just under the snow line. I wish I could have described a mountain lion which I once saw in the middle of a warm summer's night in Estes Park, when I was lying awake in bed, and which I pursued some distance in the costume peculiar to that part of the four-and-twenty hours

usually devoted to sleep. I might have carried you with me to Newfoundland, to stalk cariboo on the great barrens, and taken you on snow-shoes in the winter to track moose upon the hardwood ridges, when the forest is more glorious perhaps even than in the fall. I could have shown you glimpses of primitive life among the French-speaking 'habitants' of Lower Quebec and the simple Celtic, Gaelic-speaking population of eastern Nova Scotia, and given you a peep into lumber camps and birch-bark wigwams, and talked much to you about Indians—that strange race, which, even when it shall have entirely disappeared, will have left an enduring mark behind it. Civilised nations have passed and left no sign; but the Indian will be remembered by two things at least—the birch-bark canoe, which no production of the white man can equal for strength, lightness, gracefulness, sea-going qualities, and carrying capacity, and the snow-shoe, which appears to be perfect in its form and, like a violin, incapable of development or improvement. There are three inventions which the ingenuity of man seems to be unable to improve upon, and two of them are the works of savages. They are the violin, snow-shoes, and birch-bark canoes."

Somewhere about four o'clock in the morning after the last night I awoke and found that Willie Whisper had made up the fire, and was packing his few belongings in his blanket.

"Why, Willie," said I, "what is the matter? What are you doing?"

"What am I doing! Why, going to make a start as soon as I have made some tea, and if you take my advice you will do the same. It rained heavily all the early part of the night away back. It will be raining here pretty soon. Put your head out and you will smell it, and see the moon riding through a southerly scud. The ice is not thick. It will break up quickly under the press of water that is coming down. There's going to be a strong thaw but a very short one, and the next frost means a freeze up for the winter. I have to hustle to get out to settlements for a few necessaries, and back into the woods before all the waterways are closed, and you have no time to lose if you want to make your winter camp by canoe."

Willie was right. As he finished speaking a few drops of rain fell spluttering into the fire, and I found heavy masses of low flying clouds from the South-West drifting across the setting moon.

The air was soft and warm, redolent of resinous pines and clean wet earth. There was no doubt about the thaw. Going down to the water's edge I found a rise of several feet, a strong current rushing out, and the thin ice all breaking away. So I roused up Noel, made up our packs, brewed some strong tea, said good-bye to the newcomers, who seemed disinclined to exchange shelter for torrential rain, and plunged into the dawn to launch our dug-out and pole up against the stream. Willie Whisper came down with us to the water's edge. "God be with you," he said, as he wrung my hand, "surely we shall meet again sometime, somewhere. Perhaps in the flesh—I don't know. I think not, but who can tell? So long!"

I never did meet him again, though after some years I did once again taste the freedom of my well-beloved woods. I heard that he had died as he had lived, in the deep woods, alone among the trees.

NOTE

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